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A

Practical Discourse

CONCERNING

HOLINESS.

Wherein is shewed

The Nature, the Possibility, the Degrees, and Necessity of HOLINESS; together with the Means of Acquiring and Perfecting it.

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A

PRACTICAL DISCOURSE
Concerning
Holiness.



Onsidering how frequently the Scripture speaks of Holiness, and how strictly it requires an Holy Life here, in order to an happy state hereafter; we cannot but think our selves very deeply concern'd to have right Notions of this matter, which is apparently of such vast consequence. Mistakes here are the most dangerous, because they are infinitely prejudicial, they tend to the utter ruin of Body and Soul both; which men should the rather dread the thoughts of, because when once they fall into such ruin, they must there lie in it to all Eternity: There is

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no retreating to rectify an Error; and therefore we should all use such care as prudent Travellers take in a difficult Road, and a strange Countrey; they consider and advise, and enquire well in time, lest they lose themselves without remedy in the end, by means of a few false steps at the first setting out.

'Tis very dangerous to live and die in an Error, especially if the Error be inconsistent with Doctrines which nearly concern a future state: such is the Doctrine of Holiness; it is of that moment, and tendeth so directly to make us happy in another world, that the eternal interest of our Souls depends upon it, because the Scripture expressly tells us, *That without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Hebr. 12. 14. Seeing then God hath fixt this as an indispensable condition in order to a blessed life with himself, it follows, that to conceive false Notions of Holiness, placing it in things wherein it ought not to be placed; and to neglect true Holiness, as an impracticable or unnecessary matter, and so to go on in this course till the man comes to die, this is a thing of the most dangerous consequence in the world.

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My business therefore shall be now, to treat purposely and fully of this Subject; and, as far as I am able, to set every thing belonging to it in its due light; and for my more methodical and clear proceeding, I shall consider these five following things, as the general Heads of this Discourse.

- I. Wherein the nature of true Holiness doth consist.
- II. How possible it is to attain unto it.
- III. What Measures and Degrees of it are required of us.
- IV. How necessary the Practice of it is.
- V. What are the proper means for us to use, that we may acquire and perfect it.

C H A P. I.

I. **F**irst, Wherein the Nature of true Holiness doth consist. This is the principal thing to be understood, because it is the foundation and groundwork of all; so that unless we understand this rightly, we shall but talk at ran-

dom while we speak of Holiness. Now for the clearing of this matter, there are two Points which we must very diligently enquire into.

1. What is the Scripture Notion of Holiness in general ; and then 2dly, what the Scripture meaneth by that Holiness in particular which is proposed to men, and exacted at mens hands.

As to the Scripture Notion of Holiness in general, that learned Writer Mr. *Mede*, in his Discourse on the first Petition in the Lord's Prayer, hath laboured with good success to give the world a right account of it ; and hath particularly shew'd, that by Holiness at large, the Scripture meaneth a state of separation and singularity, whereby one thing is distinguished from others of the same rank, and is advanced in dignity and excellence above them. When there is a separation and distinction, so that a thing is divided, set apart and discriminated by way of exaltation and excellence, and is severed into a singular condition, above the common condition of things of the same order, then is it said to be Holy ; and that state of singularity is, in the language and sense of Scripture, Holiness.

This

This he proves chiefly from three places of Scripture. In *Exod.* 30. God speaking of the Oil that was to be set apart for the anointing of certain peculiar things and persons, saith, *It shall be an holy anointing oil unto me*, ver. 31. The reason was, because it was to be for Sacred Uses. Though it was compounded of ordinary Ingredients, yet it was called and reputed Holy, because the condition of it was very different from, and more excellent than other Oils: it was discriminated and separated for Consecrations, and therefore it was a capital Crime to make any other Oil of the same species and nature, or to apply that to any other use but what it was set apart for. *Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured*, (said God) *neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger*; (that is, upon any besides those it was appropriated to) *shall even be cut off from his people*, ver. 32, 33. Whence it appears, that the Holiness of that Oil consisted in the peculiarity of its composition, and the propriety of its use which it was separated for:

At the 37th and 38th verses of the same Chapter, the like is said of the holy Perfume; *You shall not make to your selves (that is, for your own common use) according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto it, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.* As the Oil was separated for Consecrations, so was the Perfume for Incense; and for that reason it was Holy, because it was of a singular and peculiar condition, quite different from other Perfumes.

But that Learned Author observes, That this Notion of Sanctity or Holiness is most expressly intimated and taught us in those Divine Periphrases or Circumlocutions which the Lord himself more than once makes of an Holy People; as, in Lev. 20. 24. God speaketh to the Jews on this manner, *I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people.* And ver. 26. *Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that you should be mine.* Mark here, that to separate, is to make Holy; and that is said to be Holy, which is separated from others of the same rank. And from that, and some other places of Scripture,

Scripture, that great man concludes, that to be Sacred or Holy, is to be set apart from other things by way of excellence; or, which is all one, to be set in some state of singularity or appropriateness, whereby it is advanced above the common condition of things of the same order.

To these Observations, which have been made ready to my hands, I shall presume to add a few more, to shew yet further, That Holiness in general consisteth in a state of Separation; in a condition of Discretion, Distinction, and Exaltation from other things.

In *Exod. 3. 5.* God calling to *Moses* out of the flaming Bush, said, *Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground.* Which cannot be understood so, as if the place had any holy qualities in it; but that the outward condition of it was for that time different from other places, more exalted and excellent, and the more to be respected, by reason of God's peculiar and glorious presence, which did then distinguish and sever it from other ground.

In *Exod. 16. 23.* the seventh day of the week is called the *Holy Sabbath*; not

for any natural, internal Holiness that can be supposed to have been in that day, but because it was discriminated from other days by Divine Institution ; distinguished and separated from the rest, and set apart for the solemn offices of Religion ; and so, in respect of its condition, was made more excellent than other days.

Throughout the *Levitical* Law, the Sanctuary, Vestments, Tithes, Offerings, Sacrifices, and all that did belong to the Tabernacle, are called the holy things ; as being separated from common use, and appropriated to the service of God.

In several places *Jerusalem* is called the *Holy City*, because the Temple there was dedicated to Religious Uses, and the People were called with an Holy Calling ; though many of them were very wicked in their Lives, yet in regard they were all separated from other Nations, and so made God's Peculiar People, they were therefore frequently stiled an Holy People.

The Mount whereon our Blessed Saviour was transfigured, is called, by St. Peter, *the Holy Mount*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. The reason is, because by the Glorious
and

and Heavenly Appearance which was there, the external condition of that Hill was at that juncture distinct and different from the condition of ordinary Mountains, though the substance of it was of the same Earth.

Lastly, In 1 Cor. 7. 14. St Paul saith of the Children of Believing Parents, that they are Holy: Which cannot be meant of inward Holiness, by Faith and actual Repentance, whereof no Infants can be capable; but they are termed and reputed Holy, because their outward state is different from that of Heathens Children; their condition is better; they are, in some sense, within the Church, separated (as it were) from the womb, because they are capable of Christian Baptism, which the Issue of Infidels are not capable of, before they come to years of discretion.

By all this it appears, That by Holiness in general, the Scripture meaneth a state of discrimination, whereby a thing is raised in external Dignity above other things that are of the same intrinsic nature. We may term it Holiness by Imputation; and however men distinguish it into Relative Holiness, or Holiness by Vocation, or Federal Cove-

Covenant-Holiness; still it signifies an exalted condition, by the discrimination and severing of one thing from another.

Now this Notion of Holiness in general, will easily lead us into the knowledge of that which is Particular, True, Substantial, Internal, Personal Holiness, or whatever else you will call that Sanctity, which is indispensably required of us men, in order to our everlasting Peace. Since Holiness at large is a state of separation and exaltation in dignity, this Holiness must be such too, or else it is not Holiness in the Scripture sense; nor can that man be said to be Holy, indeed, who is not indeed discriminated and severed from other men, as he ought to be. There must be a real difference, otherwise there cannot be true Holiness: And agreeable hereunto we shall find the Scripture Notion of this matter to be, in several places, where it meaneth the real Holiness I am now speaking of: Thus in *Prov. 12. 26. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.* And St. Paul speaking of that Faith, whereby one man is dignified above another, expresseth himself thus, *Who maketh thee to differ from another?*

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 4. 7. In like manner he exhorts us, Rom. 12. 2. *Not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds*; meaning, that our lives are to be totally differing from the wicked lives of ungodly People; of a select form, scheme and fashion; which is in other words nothing else but a description of true Holiness. This being a state of distinction, every Holy Person must carry himself after a distinct sort and manner: For there is this Analogy between an Holy Thing, and an Holy Person, that as the one must not be put to a common use, so the other must not be of a common behaviour, but such as is peculiar, appropriate, and separate from all moral Impurities: And thus the Holiness of our Saviour is described, Heb. 7. 26. *That he was harmless* (or free from evil) *undefiled, and separate from sinners*. Which is a full explication of what goes before, where Christ is called an Holy High Priest; and it plainly shews us wherein our Holiness must consist, namely, in a separation from all evil, as his did.

I would fain make this matter as clear as possibly I can, because it is the proper way of bringing men to a true sense of
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of the quality and necessity of an Holy life, and consequently to the practice of it. And therefore for the exemplifying of it, we must note, That true Holiness may be considered in a twofold respect. 1. *First*, With respect to our outward Actions, and so it is strictly called Holiness of Conversation. 2. *Secondly*, With respect to the dispositions of the mind; and so it is distinctly said to be, Holiness of heart.

1. *First*, As it relates to our outward actions; *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation*, saith St. Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 15. Where the Apostle directly meaneth our visible actions; such honest and good lives as other men behold, according to that, 1 Pet. 2. 12. *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* And again, 1 Pet. 3. 16. *Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.* This shows, that to live well, even before the eyes of men upon a Principle of Conscience, is a con-

considerable part of true Holiness. To walk meekly and humbly ; to be chaste, sober, and temperate in the use of God's creatures ; and to express all other Virtues which concern ones more private life : And so, to be righteous and just to all men ; to be respectful and dutiful to our Superiors ; to be benign and tender-hearted towards the Neccessitous ; to be peaceable and modest, kind and candid, and patient towards our Neighbours ; to be faithful to our Friends ; to be charitable and merciful to our Enemies ; and in every respect to do to others, as we our selves would be dealt with : These actions are so many laudable and necessary branches of an Holy Conversation. But (above all) to be for ever mindful of our duties in reference unto God ; to adore and worship his Majesty daily ; to observe his Laws and Will ; to study and be conversant in his Word ; to be mortified and quiet under his Judgments ; and to shew our universal submission to his Providence and Pleasure in his Government of the World : These and the like are Holy Actions indeed ; essential and inseparable Parts of an Holy Conversation.

To

To pretend therefore to Religion and Sanctity, and at the same time to lead an Ungodly, Filthy, or Dishonest Life ; must argue, either very great error in the Judgment, or very palpable Hypocrisy in the Mind ; because the notion of Holiness includes separation from Sin ; a state of discrimination from evil-doers ; and of distance and freedom from all manner of sinful and corrupted Works. Now if a man be Lewd, Vicious, or Dishonest, Where is this discrimination ? How doth the Sheep differ from the Goat or the Wolf, setting his Cloathing aside ? Where is the distinction between the Clean and the Unclean ? Where is the state of Sacredness and Singularity ? That select, uncommon, and appropriate sort of Life, which true Holiness imports ? Do not even the Publicans and Sinners the same ? Do not Atheists and Infidels live after the like manner and fashion ? Their Actions carry an identity of Nature ; nor hath any thing distinguished the Believer from the Unbeliever, but a bare Name ; and that will but increase those Mens Condemnation, who under colour of a different specious Title, hold still Communion and Fellowship with the worst

worst of Men in their Works of Darkness. When all is done, 'tis the good Liver that we must account the Holy Man: He that distinguisheth himself from other Men by the peculiarity of his good Actions; he that in Virtue is more excellent than his Neighbour; he that answers the sanctity of his Profession, by a suitable Conversation. *Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,* Tit. 2. 14. That is, zealous of Works that are singular, and eminently good. Therefore, as he delivered his Laws in a Magisterial Style, *I say unto you*; and again over and over, *I say unto you*, thereby distinguishing himself from all Teachers that were before him; so he requires of his followers higher and nobler Performances than ever were exacted before, thereby distinguishing Christians from all other People; nay, even from the *Jews* themselves, though they were the peculiar People of God. He hath chosen us out of the world, and severed us from all others, by the strictest Precepts, and by discriminating Institutions of his own; and all this that our Conversation might be unpolluted, select,

select, and becoming that Holy Name whereby we are called. He gave himself for his Church, *That he might sanctify and cleanse it.* — *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish,* Ephes' 5. 26, 27. How far this is practicable, I shall endeavour to demonstrate hereafter, when I come to that Point: In the mean time this abundantly shews, that the lives of all Christians are to be of a distinguishing Form, peculiar for Dignity, exalted as to the quality and condition of them; and then are they Holy indeed. But to pretend Holiness while one's conversation is vile and immoral, is a jest; that's the least that can be said of it, though, in truth, Prophanation doth attend it. For, since we are all by our vocation sanctified; that is, set apart for God; to walk after the flesh, and according to ones sensual and ungodly lusts; What is this but to pollute and defecate that which was dedicated to the most Holy purposes? And so St. Paul himself argues, 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. *Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God?* meaning, a Society Consecrated to God, as the Temple was among the Jews;

Jews ; If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy : for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man therefore deceive himself ; he that doth righteousness, he is righteous ; and he is the holy person in fact and reality, because it is he that is of an uncommon Conversation, separate from Sin, and Moral Impurities, which is the True Notion and Nature of that Holiness which is required of us all ; and to make Holiness consistent with an Impure Life, is direct Impiety, as well as a Contradiction.

I know there may be, and I fear too often is, an external sanctimonious Conversation, without due Internal Purity. This is like that shew of Holiness which the old *Pharisees* made, whose fair Out-sides our Saviour compares to the Frontispiece of noisom Graves ; *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity, Matth. 23. 27, 28.*

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2. Therefore secondly, the most principal part of true Holiness consisteth in the sanctified dispositions of the mind; *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*, saith our Blessed Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 8. This Holiness imports the separation of the Soul from the malignity of evil desires and affections, and the exaltation of the mind above the power of them. For our right understanding whereof we must note, that our Souls are subject (especially before the Holy Spirit of God doth cleanse and purify them; they are subject, I say) to various powerful motions, which the Scripture is wont to call, *the lusts of the flesh*, because they are raised by the carnal part in us. Moralists usually term them, the Passions and Affections of the Soul, and frequently Vices, because they taint the Mind, corrupt our Nature, and debase it beneath its genuine self; they are the dregs and filth, and sordid part of our constitution. As for instance, Evil Concupiscence, Covetousness, Envy, Pride, Contentiousness, Deceit, Anger, Bitterness, Malice, and the like ugly Passions, that make the hearts and the lives of mankind uneasy, and are the cause of all the injustice and mischief that is in the world;

world; these scurvy agitations of the Soul vitiate and stain it; to use our Blessed Saviour's expression, *Mark 7. 23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.* These and such other Vices are called Pollutions, because the God of Purity doth abhor them, and abominates the sight of them. To represent to us his own great detestation of them, he represents them under the quality of things which we our selves loath: Blood, Filth, Corruption, Vomit, and other natural Impurities, are Spectacles we are generally averse to, and cannot endure without regret; and to these the Scripture compares the vicious dispositions of the Soul, to shew God's hatred and detestation of them, and therefore we call them moral uncleannesses and pollutions of the mind. Therefore true inward Holiness must be the separation of one's faculties from all hateful and contaminating qualities, and the exercising of them in such a way, as will raise and elevate the Soul into an uncommon state. To take off our thoughts, what we can, from things sensual and earthly, and to fix the mind upon the study and contemplation of Divine Objects; to take off our inclinations and wills from

doing things which are vile and indecent, and to make the righteous Laws of God the rule and measure of our actions; to rake off our hearts, our desires and affections from unlawful, improper Objects; to part them from the world, and from the things that are in the world; from the lusts of the flesh, from the lusts of the eyes, from the pride of life; and to place them upon God and Goodness. In short, to reform and rectify one's spirit so, that it becomes free from those wicked habits which sink it beneath the dignity of a rational nature, and to exalt it into a state like that of Angels, innocent, separate from Vice, and void of Irregularities; this is that purity of heart, that sanctification of spirit, that true inward Holiness which the Holy Scripture directeth us to.

That this is a right account of entire Sanctity, will yet more fully appear, from the consideration of God's Holiness, which the Scripture proposeth to our imitation; *Ye shall be holy, for I am holy*, saith God, *Lev. 11. 44.* We are to understand it thus, *Be ye holy, as I am holy*; for St. Peter quoting that place of Scripture, makes the Holiness of God exemplary, *1 Pet. 1. 15. As he which hath called*

called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation Not that we must reach to the perfection of God's Holiness, in respect of the measure and degree of it; for that is impossible, and therefore not commanded: But the meaning is, that we must have that sort and kind of Holiness which is in God, we are to resemble him in the same quality of Holiness. And the Holiness of God which is thus propounded to our imitation is, in a few words, a separation from all moral impurity.

There is indeed an Holiness in God, wherein we cannot resemble him, nor can the very Angels of God, and that doth consist in the incommunicable and infinite excellence of his Divine Majesty, and therefore the Learned are wont to distinguish between the Holiness of God's Essence, and the Holiness of his Will. The Holiness of his Essence is, the transcendent and most august perfection and eminence of his Being and Attributes: a most glorious state of Separation, whereby he is highly exalted above all other Spirits, essentially divided from all, both in respect of the supereminent condition of his Being, and also in respect of his supereminent Perfections, his transcendent

dent Wisdom, Goodness, Power, and the like. Upon this account he is called in Scripture, *The Holy One*; and frequently, *The Holy One of Israel*: meaning, that most eminent and exalted *Numen*, or incommunicable Being, which *Israel* worshipped. In this sense, by God's Holiness, is understood his Peerless Majesty, and it is called his absolute and essential Holiness, in respect whereof there is none Holy as the Lord; and therefore the Seraphims which *Isaiah* saw in his Vision, *Isa. 6.* and the Four Beasts which *St. John* saw in his, *Rev. 4. 8.* cried one unto another, as God sat on his Throne of Glory, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts; *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

Of this incommunicable, inimitable Holiness, I do not now speak; but of the Holiness of God's Will, which is the entire rectitude of it, and it consisteth in two things: 1. First, in the Sanctity of all his purposes and inclinations; *He loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity, Psal. 45. 8.* All that evilness of heart, which is a blemish to our nature, like the most noisom filth and corruption, the Divine Nature

Nature is most perfectly free from ; and to ascribe unto God those vicious qualities, that Sowreness, Cruelty, Partiality, Hatred and Enmity to innocent Souls, which some are not afraid to attribute unto God ; this, though it be not the denying, yet it is the blaspheming of his Being ; *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*, 1 John 1. 5. where by Light and Darkness, the Apostle meaneth Holiness and Impurity : because Light is the most unmixt Creature. St. *John* by that metaphorical expression, shews God to be infinitely the purest of all Beings, without the least pravity, or any mixture that unbecometh his most perfect Nature ; immaculate in the highest degree ; Purity it self, as being the perfection of Sanctity in all the inclinations of his mind. 2. 2dly, God's Holiness consisteth in the Sanctity of all his Actions ; *He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, Psal. 145. 17. He neither decreeth, nor doeth, nor commandeth, nor approveth of any thing which in the common sense of Mankind is foul or ill ; such Actions he cannot do, no more than he can lie ; because they are inconsistent with the dignity of a Nature so sublime and perfect

fect, and are repugnant to those Rules of his own infinite reason, whereby he governs the world; especially the children of men, to whom he hath given the most holy Laws, and that for this reason, that thereby he might make them partakers of his own purity.

This being the Notion of that Holiness in God, whereof we are commanded to bear a resemblance and similitude in our selves, a state of separation from all pravity both of action and mind; it shews us, what is to be the great care and business of our Lives, *viz.* to be universally good, as goodness is opposed to all immorality of heart and work; or, as the Scripture speaks, *to all filthiness of flesh and spirit*. There are two great branches of Sanctity, first Innocence, and then Virtue; and we have little to do in this world, but to see that our Hearts and Lives be such as becometh Holiness; or suitable to the profession of those whom God hath called to be his peculiar people, zealous of good works.

And from these Premises, two practical Inferences will naturally follow: *i.* First, that we must have a care of depending upon things which are quite different

different matters from true Holiness.

2. Secondly, that every one must be careful to have true actual Holiness of his own.

1. First, We must have a care of depending upon things which are quite different matters from true Holiness. By those different matters I understand such actions, as neither have any real Sanctity in them, nor are really instrumental towards it; and those men must needs run the greatest hazards, who in such a case as this go upon delusions, believing those things to be sanctifying, which indeed are not so, and trusting themselves that they are Holy by means of them.

Such are the people of the *Romish* Communion, who placing Holiness not in solid, rational duties, and acts of the mind, but in variety of external, ceremonial, I wish we might not say too, Idolatrous, Superstitious, and most Ridiculous Performances; turn Religion into Comedy and Show, where the most zealous and artificial Actor is the most renowned Saint. In the account of those people, the way to be holy, is to be strict as to Ritual Observances, Penances, Gallig Pilgrimages, Painful Dresses and Lodgings, Scourgings, and Dila-
cerations

cerations of the Carcass, and such other sorts of affected Discipline and tormenting Severities. Now did Vice lie, like a Scab, upon the surface of the flesh, or like a noxious humour between the skins, these methods of Church-Surgery might be proper enough to let out the corruption. But the distempers of the heart, as they are of another nature, so they lie too deep to be within the reach of Stripes; and however the man be punished, the Sinner escapes without correction or smart. The castigation of the Body is one thing, and the sanctification of the Spirit is quite another. That's the vital, essential part of Holiness, when the Soul is ennobled with the distinguishing habits of entire Virtue, cleans'd and separate from those Lusts, which are reproaches to a rational and immortal substance, and is renovated into the Image of a most Holy God, by the singular rectitude of its Faculties and Operations; and to lay any stress upon exterior Mortifications and Formalities, is after a more solemn matter to destroy the Christian, and to set out an odd sort of Pageant or a Mummy.

There are some on the other hand, who, though they are guilty of scandalous

lous Immoralities, (Injustice, Lasciviousness, Reviling, Drunkenness, and the like) yet value themselves most mightily for their Faith, as they call it; meaning not so much the belief of the common Articles of the Christian Creed, as some By-Opinions, wherein they differ from their Fellow-Christians, and thereby think themselves to be the Holy, and perhaps the Only People of God. Now whatever mens Principles are, they signify nothing if their Lives be bad: For those Opinions are either true, or false; if false, they are much the worse for being attended with Vice too, nay, perhaps for being the causes of it. Many such Opinions there are as encourage Immorality, and 'tis odds but people do therefore chuse them; they like them, not so much for the reasons and grounds of them, as for their kind nature; because they side with their darling Lusts, and lend them the help of Divinity, to ruin the practice and necessity of good manners. In this case our great Legislator saith, *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh to the*

the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd,
John 3. 19, 20.

But if their Principles be true, it is an aggravation of mens guilt, that they do not live up to them. What are those Notions worth, which lie idle in the brain, without sending any thing to the heart, to affect and purify it? All that can be said is, that such men know enough to make them better; but are much the worse, for wrapping up a good Creed in an evil Conscience: and in this case St. Paul tells us, *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,* Rom. 1. 18.

It is no boldness to say, that Faith it self, though it be true, is not to be depended on, if it be not powerful, operative, and evidencing of it self by acts of Holiness. Great things indeed are spoken of it, and our greatest happiness depends upon it; yet not as it is a Notion, or a bare Assent of the Mind to the Gospel, but as it is a Principle, an efficacious Instrument of all manner of Holiness. Hence it is called, *our most holy faith*, Jude 20. because where it worketh after a genuine and kindly sort, and with

with influence over the faculties of the Soul, it is naturally productive of the highest Sanctity. And hence it is, that the necessity of Faith is so often, and so strictly inculcated; because without the hearty belief of our Saviour's Divine Authority, we cannot conceive how Men should think themselves obliged to undertake his Religion, the whole reputation and interest whereof depends upon the Credit of this single Article, *That Jesus Christ is the Son of God*. The direct way of bringing People to obey his Laws, and to rest upon his Promises, is to convince them first of the greatness of his Person and Office: This is the direct way, though indeed it is not always thoroughly effectual. For St. James, in his Disputation about Faith and Works, (meaning, not Works of the Mosaical Law, but Evangelical Performances) doth plainly suppose, that the one may be without the other; and when Faith is by it self, a fruitless, liveless persuasion, without actions agreeable, it is then as good as nothing, because it doth not come up to that height which is observable in the Devils themselves, *who believe and tremble*, Jam. 2. 19. Such a solitary

solitary belief, as exerteth not it self by actual Holiness, is called, at the next verse, *a dead faith*; because it is without due motion, without operation and efficacy. And if a languid Faith be utterly unavailable, 'tis an Argument that Bigotry hath turn'd people into Lunatics, when they trust to Opinion, or to the belief of some odd Doctrines, which are unnecessary and doubtful. Such Opinions are as short of Faith, as Faith it self is short of the main thing, when it is not attended with other acts of obedience. 'Tis purity of heart and life, wherein substantial Religion doth consist, and so the Apostle resolves it, *Jam. 1. 27. Pure religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

2. And hence the second practical Inference directly follows, That every one must be careful to have true actual holiness of his own; that is, to have in himself those dispositions of mind, and distinguishing virtues, as will discriminate him from an immoral World, and exalt him above others in dignity and excellence.

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They who first taught people to rely upon the merits of Saints, intended to deserve well of the licentious part of Mankind, by shewing them a trick how they might go to Heaven by Proxies, and by getting others to do all their works for them. This is to gratify flesh and blood; and for Avarice and Superstition sake to destroy the necessity of an Holy Life; that is, all true Religion. For who will be content to undergo the difficulties which the sincere practice of Religion is attended with, if he knoweth a way of shifting the burthen off from his own shoulder to his Neighbour's, and of making his Purse to compound for all his Actions?

Again; That distinction we meet with in Reformed Writers, between inherent and imputed Righteousness, though in some sense it be allowable and useful, yet some have unfortunately made such a bad use of it, as to remove by it the necessity of Personal Holiness in a mans own self. For to this purpose they understand the Doctrine of Imputation; That a Believer hath the Righteousness of Christ directly made over to him, so that it becomes his own; and that he is thereby made really and perfectly righteous

teous in Christ, and in Christ doth fulfil all righteousness, whatever the quality of his own Life is.

I do not intend to wade now into the Controversy about this matter; but shall say these Two things only: 1. That in all the Scripture it is no where expressly said, That the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. 'Tis said indeed, *That faith was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness*; meaning, That God of his goodness was pleased to accept of it instead of spotless obedience; and used *Abraham* as if he had been a perfectly righteous man. 'Tis said also, *That righteousness was imputed to them too, who believe as Abraham did*; meaning, That they are in God's account esteemed, and dealt with as righteous persons, even as *Abraham* himself was. 'Tis said again, *That Christ is made righteousness unto us*; meaning, That he is the cause of our Divine Virtues, and of our pardon and acceptance with God: But that His Righteousness is made ours, or transferred over to us, the Scripture saith not, neither doth it mean it, in any one place. 2. I say, That to men who are most stiffly addicted to preconceiv'd Opinions, the Doctrine of Imputation is very obvious

ous and easy. For according to our best Divines, the sense of it is this in short, That when we sincerely endeavor to live in obedience to the Laws of Christ, for his sake God doth accept of our Faith and imperfect services, and imputes them to us, in lieu of that exact, sinless Righteousness, which the rigour of the Law requires, and accordingly is pleased with us, approves and rewards us, as if we were most perfectly righteous and holy; and all this in consideration of the spotless obedience of his own Son. This is the sum of the matter: But for people (especially for people of wicked hearts and lives) to pretend that they are righteous, because Christ was so; that they are holy in him; that they are meek, just, chaste, sober, patient, and charitable in him, when they are strangers to these perfective Vertues: This is most absurd in it self, and the consequences of this Opinion are most pernicious, because it renders all personal Holiness and inherent Vertue altogether useless. Indeed it is a Paradox that is very comfortable to men of ungodly lives and tempers; and it prevails among some, because they are willing to have the works of salvation done to their hands

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by others: and so, as some throw the task upon the Saints, these cast it upon the Son of God, not considering what St. James tells us, *Jam. 1. 25. Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* There must be personal holiness of our own, as a necessary condition to prepare us for that Righteousness which is imputative: that is, We must make Piety and Vertue the business of our lives, to dispose and fit us for God's gracious acceptance at our lives end; that for Christ's sake he may at last repute, reckon, account us fulfillers of his Law, *tho in many things we offend all.* This is the middle way, between the Papists on the one hand, who build upon Works without Imputation; and those on the other hand, who rely upon Imputation without any Works; unless it be the single work of Faith: And I end this Point with those words of St. Paul, which are both an Exhortation to that Holiness I have been speaking of, and a description too of the quality and nature of it, *Eph. 4. 17, 18, &c. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, That ye henceforth walk not as others do*

do walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

CHAP. II.

2. **W**HAT hath been hitherto spoken doth suppose the practice of Holiness to be possible: For if it be not so, 'tis no purpose to tell men what Holiness is, or what obligations they are under to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; or what they are to do that they may perfect holiness in the fear of God. The ut-

ter impossibility of a thing cuts the sinews of Industry all at once ; for no man will go about that, which he knows before-hand cannot be done ; or if he should attempt it , as soon as he finds the impossibility of it by his sad experience, he will presently give it over. Seeing then all encouragement depends upon the hope and prospect men have concerning the success of their labours ; when People are called upon to lead an holy life, this consideration doth naturally arise, Whether the matter be really practicable. This therefore is to be the second Point for me to discourse of ; and to make way for what I intend, 'tis necessary to premise these two following Principles:

1. *First* , That true Holiness is not practicable without the help and assistance of Divine Grace. This is laid down to prevent the Controversy which the Ancient Church maintained against those Hereticks, *Pelagius* and his Followers, who ascribed all to the power of a man's natural Will, owned no supernatural Grace, but the illumination of the Mind, by the Doctrine and Example of Christ. In opposition to which pernicious Error, the Scripture doth

doth in many places give us authority to affirm, That Nature, especially when depraved by vicious habits, is utterly indisposed for acts of true Holinefs; that *we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing* (that is holy) *as of our selves*; that *all our sufficiency is of God*; and that we stand in need of his sanctifying Spirit, not only to inform our Understandings by light from without, but also to endue us with a vital power within, to prevent, assist, further, and strengthen our Wills and Affections, throughout our whole course.

2. The second Principle is this, That True Holinefs is not practicable as to degrees and measures which are not absolutely perfect. The Laws of God, which are the Rule of Holinefs, may be consider'd, either in a severe and rigorous sense, as speaking of Obedience without the least blemish or spot; and thus they are impossible to be kept by us now, because we are in a state of great imperfection, subject to so many weaknesses, *that there is no man that sinneth not*, saith Solomon, 1 Kings 8.46. And again, *There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not*, Eccl. 7.20. None was ever yet perfectly innocent, but that mirror

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of Sanctity who was obedient for us all, He indeed *did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. *But if we say, that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 John 1. 8. Or else God's Commands may be consider'd in a qualify'd sense, as they are attemper'd with the clemency and goodness of God, who requires no more under pain of Damnation but what we are able, and leaves room for Repentance and Pardon for what we cannot do. For such is the tenor of the New Covenant, that though the Laws of God are perfect, yet they demand obedience according to the power of imperfect men; and by God's mercy, Repentance is made a Supplement where we fail, and Forgiveness followeth; and the sincere Penitent *is accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not*, as St. Paul speaks of a willing mind, 2 Cor. 8. 12.

These two things being premised, the Proposition to be laid down now will be this, That by the grace of God assisting our Endeavours, and by the mercies of God pardoning our Infirmities, a life of true Holiness is very possible, to such a degree, as God will accept and eternally

ly reward. What that degree is, I shall endeavour to shew in due time; at present this is enough for me to say, because it is enough to encourage all our labours, if we will but make use of that divine grace, and exert that supernatural power which he giveth unto us all. The proof of the Proposition is all that is incumbent upon me now, and for that be pleas'd to weigh with an equal hand these four Considerations.

1. Were true Holiness impossible, what would become of the Attributes of God, which are the foundation of all Religion? Because he is a Being that is infinitely wise, just, powerful, merciful and good, he is deservedly and necessarily the object of our entire obedience, and therefore whatever is inconsistent with the glory of these Perfections, can never be thought by any reasonable men to be right or true. Now to say that true Holiness is impracticable, though it be so strictly required, under pain of God's eternal displeasure, what is it but to set up an opinion that is utterly destructive of those divine Attributes which are the splendor and beauty of God's nature? For would it not be a most unwise thing for a Lawgiver to exact that, and under

the severest Penalty too, which he knows before hand can never be done? What expectation of Obedience can go along with such a Command? or if it could, the impossibility of the thing must defeat and baffle his own intentions; that is, it would render him a Legislator that acteth to no rational end or purpose. Or, say men should be so senseless and impious as to suppose God to be a meer arbitrary Being, that imposeth Laws for his pleasure sake only, where is the righteousness, the equity of that Law, which exacteth things that are out of one's power? This would be to upbraid men for their disabilities and misfortunes; but unless we lay aside all the common Notions of Equity, we cannot think it an Act of Justice; and yet by that single glorious Attribute God was pleas'd to condescend so far, as to offer all his actions to be tried by the unreasonable *Jews* themselves, *Ezek. 18. 29. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal?* There could be no room for such an Expostulation, were the Laws of God like the Commands of him, who reproached common Humanity, by exacting Brick without Straw. Or, if impossible Laws may be thought just, how can it consist with the Righteousness

teousness of God to exert his Power, in damning his poor Creatures for want of obedience, which they cannot in the least help? And much more repugnant must it be to the Divine Goodness, to those merciful and gracious proceedings which God hath used under the Gospel; to send his Son from Heaven, out of pity and commiseration to a sinful world; by his Example, to teach us Holiness; by his Promises, to give us the highest encouragements to it; by his Passion, to atone for all past Iniquities; to let him smart, and bleed, and die, that he might make an end of sins, *Dan.* 9. 24. and at the same time to lay such terrible Commands upon us, as leave us still under an unavoidable necessity of sinning on; how can this consist with the gracious nature of the New Covenant, and with the mercies, the tender mercies of Almighty God? And this Rigour being supposed, how frustraneous is the whole work of our Redemption? to what purpose was the Blood of Christ spilt? to what purpose was the Gospel publisht? to what purpose are all Precepts, Exhortations, Admonitions, and Promises? In short; to what purpose hath God done any thing for us, if it be impossible for us to
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do what he requires us, our selves? we must then say with *St. Paul* upon another subject, *1 Cor. 15. 17.* If it be thus, *your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

2. But, *secondly,* To shew yet farther the possibility of true Holiness, let us consider the nature of those Vertues, in the habitual practice whereof, after a sublime and distinguishing manner, true Holiness doth consist. They are such as are not only perfective of Human Nature, but very agreeable also to Human Reason (I mean when right Reason sits in judgment above our brutish Lusts;) and therefore they must be practicable, because in the common sense of Mankind they are very fair. God hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? *Micah 6. 8.* Now these general things are highly consonant even to natural Reason; and so are those particular Vertues which lie folded up in these, and which make up the main of our Religion. Though Christianity proposeth to our belief divers Truths which are not contradictory to Reason, but yet above it, so that Reason could not have dis-

discovered them without Revelation ; yet as to the moral part of it (for the promoting whereof those Divine Truths were discovered) every discerning Eye must needs see the great beauty and excellency of it ; because it containeth such Virtues as are most fit, proper and necessary for Creatures, that have a faculty to distinguish between good and evil. Nay, some of those who have been Aliens from the Faith, have been so renowned for the practicks of our Religion, that they will rise up in judgment against us, to our condemnation and shame too, if after all the methods of God's Grace we have nothing to distinguish us from them, but this, that we have a better Character, and worse Morals. A just *Aristides*, a chaste *Lucretia*, an honest *Plutarch*, a temperate *Cato*, an unpassionate *Epictetus*, and severe *Seneca*, a divine *Plato*, a patient, charitable, and pious *Socrates*, that suffer'd Martyrdom for the belief of one God ; such wise and virtuous Heathens as these, admired, and in great proportions practis'd those things, the sincere love and observance whereof is the holiness of a Christian. And had their Actions proceeded from a principle of faith, and been animated with an universal

versal love, and been directed to the glory of God, they might have been called holy Persons as well as we : And seeing we have infinitely a better light to go by, greater aids to strengthen us in our progress, stronger encouragements to go on with vigour, and a clearer prospect at our journeys end; 'twere strange indeed, that all those things should be impossible to Grace, most whereof, as to the matter and substance of them, have been practicable even by Nature.

3. *Thirdly*, We are to consider the condition of those Sins, from which the cleansing of our flesh and spirit is another part of true Holiness : Not sins of common, human infirmity, meer weaknesses of Nature, indeliberate Offences, subreptions that are incident to all, even the best men, faults that steal and creep upon us unawares, and without our consent; startings of the Fancies and Passions, rather than Acts of the Will : From such Frailties it is impossible for us to live in a separate state, till we part with flesh and blood, and take our final leave of corruption ; because they are parts of our corrupt Nature, ingredients of that composition we brought with us into the world ; therefore they are not to be reckoned

reckoned moral Impurities, or such stains and pollutions as the Scripture makes inconsistent with a state of Holiness. But the sins we are bound at our peril to purify our selves from, are provoking Enormities; such as in common construction are Crimes, in contradistinction to Faults and Errors; foul, gross, heinous Offences: And they are of two sorts. 1. First, Such as for the nature and quality of them are very grievous; crying sins, in the language of Scripture; as Murther, Adultery, Theft, Rapine, Malice, and the like, which are called, the works of the Flesh. 2. Secondly, Such sins as are lesser for the kind and quality of them, but yet acted wilfully, knowingly, habitually, and upon deliberation and choice, which the Scripture calleth, sinning with an high hand; committing iniquity with greediness; making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; doing of sin, and the like. Offences of these two sorts are according to the stile and idiom of Scripture distinctly and strictly denominared wickedness, lewdness, filth, pollution; and, in one general term, Sins: Now I appeal to any reasonable man's Conscience, whether Crimes of this nature may not be avoided;

avoided; and consequently, whether it be not possible for an humble, sober, and watchful Christian to live without them, especially throughout the general tenor of his life? For these are plain acts of the Will, which such a man may help; because, tho corrupt Nature be inclined to those evil Actions, yet there are influences of the Holy Spirit, which enable us all to be too hard for Nature, if we do but industriously set about it. 'Twas not the peculiar Priviledge of St. Paul, *That God's grace was sufficient for him; or that he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him: For he giveth the Holy Spirit to all them that ask him, Matth. 11. 13. He giveth grace unto the humble; nay, more grace, Jam. 4. 6. He giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, Jam. 1. 5.* That Parable of the Sower scattering his Seed with an indifferent hand, *Matth. 13.* and that other of a Lord dividing his Talents among his Servants, *Matth. 25.* are Arguments of God's Bounty, in dispensing his Grace to such as need it. And though he dispenseth not to all the same proportion, but as he himself in his wisdom seeth it best, yet none have just reason to complain of utter want.

want. Even the wicked Servant had one Talent given him ; and as his hiding it in the earth was an Argument of his own sloth, so his Punishment for it is a warning to us all, *that we receive not the grace of God in vain : For unto every one that hath* (employed his Talents of Grace) *more shall be given , and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not* (improved it) *shall be taken away, even that which he hath, Mat. 25. 29.* After all this, What do men talk of the Impossibilities of true personal Holiness, when God furnisheth even unfaithful people with Abilities to do his Will in some good, acceptable measure, suitable to those Abilities? so that if there be any Impossibilities at last, it is that they bring upon themselves the result of their own unprofitable and lazy disposition. What else can hinder the improvement, though it be but of one Talent? For every one may use what Abilities he hath, let them be more or less. 'Tis Nonsense to say, it is not possible for every man to do what he can do ; and 'tis certain that if he doth so, it is the thing God requires and rewards.

4. But when all is said that can be upon this Subject, we must take our Saviour's

viour's own word for it, in *Mat. 11. 30.* *That his yoke is easy, and his burden light.* And *St. John's*, in *1 John 5. 3.* *That God's commandments are not grievous.* This must determine the Point, because the words are positive and express, and the sense of them is as clear as any thing can be under the cover of a Metaphor. The plain meaning in other words is, That the practice of Christ's Religion, and consequently a state of Holiness, is so far from being impossible, that it is no very difficult matter, no grievous undertaking, but a facil and pleasant thing; an easy yoke, and a light burden.

This indeed, at the first hearing, may seem a Paradox, because it seems contradictory to those Notions which the Scripture gives us touching the observance of Christ's Religion, as if it were next to impossible, if not altogether an impracticable matter. For, 1. *First*, There are divers of his Commands which are so strict and severe, that we cannot do them without tearing, as it were, our very Nature into pieces. Of this sort are those high Precepts, of not coveting, of self denying, of taking up and bearing the Cross with patience; of loving our Enemies; of blessing those that curse

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us; of doing good to such as despightfully use us, and persecute us; of returning good for evil, and the like. These Duties are so contrary to our Nature, and to those Inclinations and Passions which are a part of it, that Flesh and Blood will tell us, if we resolve to be Christians, we must cease being men, considering how opposite these Laws are to that temper and constitution which every man brings with him into the world. 2. *Secondly*, Though we be regenerated by the operation of the Holy Ghost, yet Grace doth not destroy our Faculties, but men we are still; subject to powerful Temptations from without, and to strong Sollicitations and Conflicts within, the Flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit striving against the Flesh: So that before we can be Conquerors, we must be too hard for our selves, and overcome our selves; which, though it be the most glorious Victory, yet certainly is one of the most difficult things in the world. 3. *Thirdly*, The Scripture representeth the practice of Christianity under such Idea's as are apt to frighten people in their very first Attempts, by reason of that Indulging Principle which is in every

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Child of Man. 'Tis represented, not only by labouring, watching, striving, fighting, bringing one's Body under, and the like ; but moreover, by putting the Old Man off ; by mortifying our Members ; by circumcising our very Hearts ; by crucifying the Flesh ; by plucking out the Eyes, and by cutting off the Right Hand ; Expressions that signify the greatest Severities and Hardships : so that as a life of Holiness is described, it requires such force and violence upon Humanity, as one would think to be in a manner impossible.

I think I have given now the fairest advantage that can be to that Opinion, touching the Unfeasibleness of an Holy Life. But yet we cannot conceive, that our Blessed Saviour called and encouraged men to it, and at the same time deterr'd them from it, by rendring it impracticable ; for that would be to build as with one hand, and to destroy with the other ; the only difficulty then is, how to reconcile these Expressions, which seem to carry such Inconsistences along with them.

Now for the clearing of this Point, we must note that these words, Heavy and Light, Grievous and Easy, are Relative terms,

terms, spoken of things according to the condition and abilities of the person ; for that is light to one, which is heavy to another ; and that is grievous to one, which is very easy to another. Who but *Goliath* himself could bear his ponderous Accoutrements? There was as much difference between the *Philistine's* Staff, and the Sling that was in the hand of *David*, as there was between a Giant and a Stripling ; and yet *Goliath* himself carried it, though *it was like a weaver's beam, and the spears head weighed six hundred shekels of iron*, 1 Sam. 17. 7. And so was *Saul's* Armour too cumbersome and heavy for a Youth, whose greatest burden generally was a Shepherd's Bag ; and yet it was light and easy enough to a Prince, who *was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward ; nor was any like him*, 1 Sam. 10. 23. It is thus in all Instances, *As the man is, so is his strength*, Judges 8. 21. And as his strength is, so is the burden upon him greater or less, heavy or light in proportion.

To accommodate this now to our purpose : A Life of True Holiness, as it is not at all impossible to any who are assisted with the common grace of that

Holy Spirit, *which helpeth our infirmities,* Rom. 8. 26. So neither is it grievous unto those who make use of that help, and improve those assistances, by their diligent and assiduous Practice of Religion: For Practice doth increase our Abilities, and by degrees wears off that uneasiness, which is most felt at the first taking up of the Burden; so that it becomes like a Yoke, that is lighter and lighter every day to a Bullock that is accustomed to it. 'Tis not so much the weight, as the roughness and unaptness of it to his young shoulders, that makes it a burden. The longer it is worn, the smoother and fitter it is, and consequently the more portable and easy; and for this reason our Saviour compared his Religion to a Burden and a Yoke, because the more we practise it, the better it fits upon us, and the more doth our strength grow under it.

At the first undertaking of Religion, Nature indeed is very awkward, especially if Wickedness hath been customary and familiar to the man. For the Precepts of Holiness are so repugnant to his evil Courses, that he cannot pass from a vicious to an holy state, without great difficulty; because in order to it he is to
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do a double work; not only to rectify Nature, but to shake off Habits also; which is a hard task to a lewd Wretch that hath taken long pleasure in sin. Nature it self is like a Byass, that inclines and binds him still to one side; but Use and Custom adds to the Byass, and makes him more prone to that way, whither his evil Heart hath led him with delight so many years. In this case, to put off the old man is a kind of slaying; almost as hard a matter, as for an *Ethiopian to change his skin, and the Leopard his spots*, Jer. 13. 23. Custom renders Vice as dear to one, as a right Hand, and a right Eye; nay, as ones Flesh and Heart: And therefore it is no wonder, that the Scripture compares the parting with it, to Evulsions, Amputations, Crucifixions, and the like; because it is not done without great reluctancy and pain. However, done it may be, tho it costeth smart and trouble; and those severe expressions which the Scripture useth, shew not the impossibilities of the work, but what zeal and resolution should attend the operation: The design of them is, not to discourage, but to quicken our utmost endeavours, because the Task is most difficult and painful in the begin-

ning; and every day will make it less and less.

Now this should excite our Industry to practice and perfect Holiness, because we see how strong and prevalent Custom is. Habits, when once contracted, draw very powerfully, whether it be to the left hand, or to the right. A man's Faculties improve and gather strength by constant exercise; so that when he hath arrived in some fair measure to a state of Holiness, his progress in it will be with much facility. There is that discernible excellency in the Laws of Holiness, as daily captivates his Reason more and more with charming Ideas. There is such peace of Conscience attending, as he finds preferable to all the Pleasures under the Sun. There is such a prospect of Eternal Joys hereafter, as giveth new life and vigour to all the powers of his Soul. There is too now that experience of his own, which convinceth him that those Joys are attainable. There is such ease and comfort in every respect, that an holy Person would not be out of his condition for all the world. The practice of Holiness is, as it were, natural to him; his walking daily in the spirit makes it so; and thereby his Inclinations draw

draw him now as powerfully the one way, as formerly they did the other. Hence the Apostle saith, *1 John 3. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* By sin he meaneth, foul, heinous, deliberate wickedness; and when he saith, a regenerate Person cannot commit it, the sense is, that it is, though not absolutely, yet morally impossible; or a very hard matter to persuade him to it, because it is utterly against his Inclinations and Temper; being now accustomed to a strict course. We commonly say, a man cannot do that, which he hath no mind or fancy to, but is averse from it, and set against it. And thus many things are morally impossible, which in their nature are possible enough, if men would be wrought upon to try their possibility. They can drink poison, or cut their Throats, or leap into the Flames, if they will. But People in their senses are utterly averse to such desperate Practises; they are repugnant to their Minds and Inclinations, contrary to that principle of Self-preservation which is essential to our common nature; and therefore they use to say, they cannot do them.

In like manner; He that uses himself habitually to an holy course of life, cannot commit sin; 'tis against the principle of Grace within him; against his Temper and Disposition; against his Nature, as it were; because against that manner of life, which, through the help of God's Spirit, Custom hath now made familiar to him. In the nature of the thing 'tis not impossible, any more than it is impossible for a sober man to turn Drunkard, if he hath opportunities, and a mind to it. But considering the Rules of Temperance he is wont to go by, and constantly observe, it is in some sense impossible for him to turn with the Dog to his vomit, and of a Saint to make himself a Beast. Briefly; When our Saviour tells us, *That his yoke is easie, and his burthen light*: And when St. John declares, *That whosoever is born of God, cannot commit sin*; they both suppose men to act with caution, care, and diligence; with a watchful eye to God's Commandments, and upon the Principles of Faith and Love; the two Principles that will enable any willing and industrious mind to overcome the World.

The scope of this Consideration is, to stir us all up to walk vigorously in the paths

paths of Holiness, not pretending with the slothful man, *That there is a lion in the way*, as the expression is, *Prov. 26. 13.* Those terrible hinderances which people object, to excuse their own listless, heavy temper, proceed rather from imagination, than from the thing it self. For, did God promise, That in the days of the *Messiah* he would write his Law in mens hearts, *Jer. 31. 33.* and can we think it was to be another killing letter? Did Christ give himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, *Eph. 5. 26, 27.* or do we say, we cannot be holy, and without blemish? Did he pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, that we might be led by it, and through it might mortify the deeds of the Body, *Rom 8. 13.* and do we pretend that both Flesh and Spirit in us is very weak? Are we commanded to cleanse our hearts, to purify our minds, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God; and after all do we conclude it impossible? Are we taught to pray, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*; and do we reserve this fullen, phlegmatick thought, that it is not in
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our power to do it? In short, Do we say, we are not able to keep God's Commandments, when we are so often call'd upon by God himself, who knows our strength as well as wants, far better than we our selves do? Indeed there are very warm Debates about the Impotency of our Nature, and the necessity of Divine Grace; and in the Theory some are very wise. But it were better to fall from Speculation to Practice; and instead of disputing, to give our minds to live well; that will shew best what our Abilities are.

For the encouragement of our Industry, we should look upon the Rules of Holiness, not barely as Laws, or Duties exacted of us by God's Absolute Pleasure, and Sovereign Authority; but as Laws that are clothed with many great and precious Promises, which God of his goodness and mercy hath given us to make that which is our duty our delight also. For the Will of man naturally moves towards an apparent Good; and the greater and more excellent that Good is, the stronger is the motion; and consequently, the easier and pleasanter is the Action, which is for the obtaining of that Good. Now among those things

things which are really and truly impossible, this is one, That so great a Good can be propos'd to us, as what the God of Truth hath promised us, to promote and reward an Holy Life. We have a promise of his own aid and assistance; a Promise too, that he will pardon our past Sins, and future Infirmities; and after all, a promise of an Eternal State of Glory and Happiness with himself when this Life is at an end: And what more than this can we possibly desire to facilitate and sweeten all our Labours, whatever those Labours be, which some think so great and intolerable in a course of Holiness? Since God will help us in all our holy Undertakings, how can any thing be impossible or difficult? Since he will forgive our unavoidable weakness, what an easie and comfortable thing is it to do what we can? And since all our Labours are nothing in comparison of that Bliss which is prepared for us, how can any thing be thought hard, or heavy, if laid in the balance against a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory? The expectation of this alone is enough to inspire any heart with courage and resolution, whatever hardships are supposed to be in our way. In all Cases,
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Hopes that are good and great are apt to quicken men to the most troublesome and painful Performances, and at the same time to keep off all dolorous sense of them. Witness the pains men take, and the hazards they run in their pursuit of this world, though they are sure beforehand, either not to succeed in their eager course, or if they do, to lose all their Acquisitions in a little time, and to drop them out of their hands for ever. Notwithstanding this, the hope of Honours, Riches, or Pleasures, puts them upon the most toilsom Enterprizes, nor are their Drudgeries hardly felt. Now this shows the true reason, why some are willing to count an Holy Life a very strange, impracticable business: 'Tis either because they permit their Carnal Lusts to reign in them, so that they have no well-grounded Hopes of a Blessed State hereafter, or else because they have very superficial Notions of a Future State; so that the Hopes they have are very slight, faint and mean. For certainly, were their Desires of Heaven as eager, and their Expectations of it as big, and their Prospect that way as alluring and sensible, as what they have of these Earthly Enjoyments, nothing could be begrudg'd, or thought

thought an hard matter, that is apt to help them on towards the fruition of those Felicities that are above. The most difficult and thwarting Duty that is upon us, is to undergo with patience, Persecution, Poverty, and Death it self, for the sake of a good Conscience: And I would fain know, what hardship can be thought to be in all this, by men who have reasonable good Hopes of an Happy Life in another World, without termination and intermission? 'Tis said of our Blessed Saviour, *That for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame*, Heb. 12. 2. But, lest that should not be lookt upon as a very wonderful and singular instance, because of the Union of his Divine Omnipotent Nature to his Humanity, what think we of meer men? such as *Abraham*, who went stedily and chearfully thro' all his Tryals and Travels, because *he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*, Hebr. 11. 10. What think we of *Moses*, who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, because he had respect unto the recompence
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of the reward, ver. 25. 26. ? And what think we of the others the Apostle speaks of, who *though they were tortured, yet would not accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*, ver. 35. ? This plainly argues, That where Faith and Hope are vigorous, there is no mighty hardship, no not in an Holy Death; and therefore an Holy Life, which is inseparably attended with all the satisfaction and pleasure one's mind is capable of now, must needs be very easy (at least) to those who heartily embrace the Promises of God; especially considering how clearer those Promises are under the Evangelical Dispensation, than in the days of old. Therefore to smoothe our way in a course of Holiness, notwithstanding the Briars and Thorns the cursed Earth bringeth forth, we should often send our Thoughts out of this world, to take what view we can of that state which is to be our *everlasting* portion. Before People remove from their present abode, 'tis good for them to consider, Whither they are to go, what the place is, how they shall live there, and what means they must use to get to it. Such enquiries about another world, should every day possess
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our minds; 'tis no more than what is necessary for us to consider, what may become of us there; what state we are likely to be in; what we must do to be happy; wherein True Happiness doth consist; and how perfect, unchangeable, and endless that is, which God hath reserved for such as love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. These ravishing *Ideas*, which must needs fall into our minds upon due Contemplation, directly serve to influence and affect us so, that an Holy Life will be both practicable and delightful, as being the proper certain means of bringing us to the enjoyment of our greatest good. If we seriously consider what we are to do, and what we are to have; how trifling the whole world is, if compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us; in what a little time we shall have run and finish'd our course here, and what an everlasting Rest we shall come to next; how few and short our Labours are, and how infinite our Reward; how inconsiderable our very Sufferings are, in respect of the Felicities that are to crown them. Such Animating Meditations as these, would make the ways of Religion ways of pleasantness, though more and stricter per-

performances were required of us, than what Christianity doth propose; and I am persuaded 'tis the want of serious and lively thinking, which makes Holiness such a grievous Burden as some would have it.

CHAP. III.

BUT you will say, Since Holiness is a state of Separation from Sin; the cleansing of our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, how is it possible? how can we hope to be so Holy in this mortal life, considering the innate Weaknesses of our Constitution; the Passions that every day betray us; the Temptations we are continually exposed to; the Oversights and Inadvertencies we are often guilty of; and a thousand Accidents which serve to ensnare our poor, infirm Nature, when that too is a snare to us? Why this brings me in the third place, to that nice Point, touching the Measures of Holiness; what Proportions and Heighths God requires of us under pain of his high Displeasure.

Now for the clearing of this important matter, which so nearly touches the
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Conscience, I shall only premise, That God requires not such a state of Holiness as is without all manner of sin; because (as I shewed before) we cannot arrive to such an high and perfect state, as long as our Souls dwell in flesh and blood. There will be Errors, Slips, Failings and Infirmities, though we be never so careful and circumspect, and therefore Sins of that nature are consistent with a state of Holiness; that is, a man may be a Holy person, though he be guilty of them.

This being supposed, I shall now venture to affirm, That these five degrees of Holiness are indispensably exacted.

1. The first and lowest degree is, That our Hearts and Lives be spotless in comparison of other mens.

2. The second is, That we abstain from known and wilful Sins, or speedily repent if we chance to commit one.

3. The third is, That the practice of Holiness be the main and general business of our Life.

4. The fourth is, That we be Universally Holy.

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5. The fifth is, That we continually persevere, and improve still in an Holy course.

1. First, 'Tis required that our Hearts and Lives be spotless in comparison of other mens. There are some who are called in Scripture the World, Ungodly, Wicked Men, Children of Disobedience, Sons of *Belial*, and the like; that is, People of Vicious Minds, and Immoral Behaviour; and Holiness being a state of Excellence, and Separation from Sinners, the least that can be expected of us is, that we walk not as ill men walk; but that our Thoughts, Purposes and Actions, be of a quite different and distinguishing nature. This is that inconformity to the world which is enjoined, Rom. 12. 2. *The putting off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts: and the putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,* Eph. 4. 22, 24. And this, I conceive, was that Holiness which is ascribed unto the Saints of old, before Christ came into the world to bring Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel; a peculiarity of Conversation, whereby they were sever'd and discriminated

nated from other People in those Ages. Thus 'tis said of *Enoch* and *Noah*, That they walked with God ; of *Job*, That he was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil, so that there was none like him in the earth; of *Josiah*, That he turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might ; of *Hezekiah*, That he walked before God in truth, and with a perfect heart ; of *Joseph*, That he was a just man ; and of *Zachary* and his Wife, That they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. All which Noble Characters must be understood in a comparative sense ; not as if those Holy People were without Human Infirmities, without Flaws and Sins ; but that they were perfect in their Generations, as the World then went, and in comparison of others. For the very Rules whereby they governed their Lives were defective, especially if compared with the Evangelical Dispensation. Natural Reason and Tradition, which was the Rule generally before the Law, was a short and scanty thing ; and the Law it self, though it was given *Moses* by Revelation, yet even that made no-

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thing perfect, and therefore in process of time *was disannulled for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof*, Hebr. 7. 18, 19. Considering then that there was a deficiency even in those Rules whereby people were guided of old, before Jesus Christ came to fulfil, that is, to raise and perfect the Law; we cannot think that those who lived according to those Rules, could be innocent in an absolute and strict sense, that is, free from all manner of spot and blemish. But they were just, upright, perfect, righteous, blameless, if we take measures of them by those that were irregular, or not so careful and circumspect as they were. And seeing a *better hope* is brought in by the Saviour of the world to *make us perfect*, Hebr. 7. 19. this is the lowest degree of that Holiness which is now required of us, that by the eminent quality of our Lives, we discriminate ourselves from the ungodly part of mankind. Are some people profane, dividing the Articles of our Religion, scorning to have any sense of it, and flinging at the Son of God Contumelies and Scoffs? Why, this must be far from such as profess Holiness. Do you see some careless, and unmindful of the necessary works

works of Piety, spending their precious time in sinful, or in vain Courses, and making that a Sacrifice to the World, which should be a daily Oblation to the Divine Majesty? why, it should not be so with you, who are by Vocation, and ought to be in Fact, holy unto the Lord. Do some go about with Lies, to slander and hurt the Innocent, to vex the Neighbourhood; to sow strife, and to hinder the progress of Vertue and Religion? why, it must not be so with you, who are called unto peace. Are other men Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, Drunkards, Proud, Quarrellous, Spiteful and Malicious? why, these Vices are the most sordid part of Corrupt Nature, arguments of degenerate Spirits and reprobate Minds; and therefore no room must be left for these, and such like Impurities, in the hearts of those who pretend to distinguish themselves from a Vicious World by Actions that are singularly good, or by a state of separation from Iniquity. I confess, thus far a Pharisee, an Hypocrite, a Castaway may come to be better than some other men; or, to be much clearer in the eye of the World, than those are who live in Riot and Excess, and make provision for the

flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. All that can be said in such a case is, that they are not so bad as other people; at least, not outwardly. Now this cannot be sufficient to entitle any one to the character of an holy person in the sense of God and Christ, and according to the construction of Christ's Gospel. We must go higher yet.

2. To the second degree of Holiness; which is, that we totally abstain from known and wilful Sins, or speedily repent, if we chance to commit one. By known and wilful Sins I understand such Enormities as a man acteth upon deliberation and choice, when neither his Ignorance doth so misguide him, nor his Passions do bear such a power over him but that he may command himself, and govern his Actions according to the Law of God, if he will. Now Sins of this kind are repugnant to a state of Holiness, and destructive of it, because they are moral Impurities which defile the man, though the Crimes be committed in the mind only; for in this case there is no more difference, than what is between an open and a secret Sinner, when both are polluted. There is an adulterous Eye; murder

ther of the Heart, and filthiness of the Spirit; nor doth God consider where the Crime is committed, but what it is, and upon what motive it was done. Voluntary Transgressions might have been prevented; and because they were not, 'tis a sign they proceeded from an allowed principle of Carnality, from the love and pleasure of them; and from a wicked Intention, which is direct backsliding, and falling into a corrupt state. *If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, &c. Heb. 10. 26, 27.* And to the same purpose the Author of that Epistle saith, Chap. 6. 4, 5, 6. *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.* I know both those places of Scripture do speak directly, and in particular, of defection from the Faith, and of such as Apostatize from Christ, and forsake Christianity. But yet thus much we may gather from them, That all wilful

sins do sink one into a very bad condition, though not so low as actual Apostacy doth. In this case, a Recovery is morally impossible ; and in the other, it is sometimes very difficult : Witness the sad, lapsed Condition wherein *David* lay for a considerable long space, after those two wilful Sins, Adultery and Murther. They were deliberate Crimes, especially the last ; a plain contrivance, and, as he thought, a Politick Design : But it brought him into a very lamentable, wretched State : And though by the special Grace of God he recover'd out of it, yet for the washing and cleansing of his Soul, it cost him to his lives end, tears, anguish, remorse, and bitter sorrows of heart ; besides many outward Troubles, which God raised up against him out of his own House.

By all this it appears, That God requireth of men such a measure of Holiness, as that they refrain from known and wilful sins ; which are not like ordinary Infirmitieſ, the spots of Children ; but rather, like the stains and brands of Apostates ; utterly inconsistent with an Holy State. Therefore whatever you are perswaded is morally evil, give all imaginable diligence to avoid it ; or, if by
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some unlucky accident you chance to be overtaken in a fault, be sure with all possible application of mind to restore your self speedily by acts of Repentance; that is, by serious reformation, and watchfulness for the future. This will help to purge the Conscience again, and to set every thing right in God's account, as if there had been no interruption of your holy course. And that you may evermore keep your self innocent from great Transgressions, and Sins of Presumption, let me give you these two Directions in short.

1. Use all necessary and proper means to understand rightly what is Good, and what is Evil. For even Sins of Ignorance are wilful, if the ignorance which is the cause of them be voluntary and affected. You are bound to know the nature of your Actions; and God hath given you such plain Rules for your information, as any one that runs may read, if he will but open his eyes. In many cases the dictates of common Reason are sufficient to guide those who would attend unto them; and what Reason wants, Revelation will supply. Therefore, that you may thoroughly understand what you are to avoid, above
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all things apply your mind to the studies of the Holy Scripture; to the reading, hearing, and meditating upon the Word of God. *The whole Scripture is given by divine inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that every man may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,* 2 Tim. 3.

2. Your Consciences being well informed, the next care should be, to accustom your self to govern the lower Faculties of your Souls, so that your Affections and Desires may be under due command. *Keep thy heart with all diligence,* Prov. 4. 23. *Out of it are the issues of life,* saith Solomon; and so are the issues of death too; there lieth the spring of all; and the way to keep every Stream pure, is to preserve cleanness in the Fountain. There will be no injustice in the Hand, where the Heart doth not covet; no filthiness in the Mouth, where the Mind is not corrupt; no adultery in the Eye, where the Affections are not lustful; no indecency in the whole man, where the Spirit is such as becometh Holiness. Where the inward parts are sanctified, there Sin cannot reign. Tho there may be now and then something
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of mutiny and commotion, yet as long as the heart is fixt, and the mind steddy, those efforts of flesh and blood, however they may disturb, will not be able to shake, much less destroy : The man is certainly in an holy state, till he falls by his own high hand, and becomes at once his own Victor, and Captive too.

3. This degree of Holiness being attained, will help us on, thirdly, to a farther measure of it than is required yet; which is, that we make the practice of Vertue the main and general business of our life; or, that we acquire an habit of it. For, it is not enough to discriminate our selves from a lewd Generation, by here and there some single Acts : This is the Holiness God looks for, That the constant strain and condition of our Actions be agreeable to the Laws of our Holy Profession. I question not but the worst of men may feel such girdings and blows of Conscience, as are apt sometimes to awaken them, especially when personal Calamities and Dangers are near at hand : And though these Pains and Frights do make them relent, yet if their yieldings be only by fits, they are no better than *Pharaoh's* Compliance was, when the Plagues of God were about

about him. Nay, Suppose their Obedience grows up suddenly into Zeal, yet if that Zeal be such a fading thing as vanisheth away, 'tis of no more value than the Prophet's Goard, that shelter'd his Head a little, but was soon smitten with a Worm. It is a state of Holiness that God requires of us; a fixt, permanent State; an habitual disposition of Soul, which is acquired by Acts constantly and daily multiplied.

I do not say, that such a State will admit of no manner of failings. Some Errors and Miscarriages there may be, which yet do no more interrupt one's progress in Holiness, than a few false steps hinder a wary Traveller; especially where the Journey is long, and the Way slippery. But my meaning is, That we must walk very uprightly and steddily in the main. Moralists will tell you, That a man is to be denominated and judged of, according as the usual frame and tenor of his Life is: So that if he be wont and accustomed to act by the Laws of right Reason, he is a vertuous Person, though his Actions be accidentally checquer'd with some variety. He may be overtaken by chance, as *Noah* was, which did not subject that good man to the odious character

rafter of a Drunkard, because it was not his course or choice, but a single unconsider'd Act, whereof he was guilty by ignorance, incogitancy, surprize, and misfortune. In like manner Divines will tell you, That an holy Person is one who is so habitually, though in some lesser instances he be guilty of a fault by accident. For there are two things to be consider'd in a Sin; the Act it self, and the love of it. Now the love of any Sin destroys Holiness; because that love is a principle of Carnality; and whatever proceeds from it must be pollution that stinketh of the Flesh: But the act of Sin may proceed from another cause; from rashness, from inadvertency, from subreption, and from the unavoidable infirmity and imperfection of Nature. Sins of this kind, and thus circumstantiated, do not interrupt a state of Sanctification; especially if they be soon repented of, so that the man goes on in his wonted course with the greater zeal, with an holy indignation, and fresh vigour, like one that recovers his slips, is vext for them, and then travels the faster. In short; Holiness must be our way and manner of life; our familiar and customary business; our design, choice, and
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common practice. The Scripture calls it, doing righteousness: meaning, That it must be done habitually. Therefore, to this measure and degree you must arrive, as God shall grant you time, to make Sanctity your course and mode of living, your ordinary and constant practice. The purpose of God is, that we should be free, though not from all sinful Acts (a Perfection which we are not capable of in this World) yet from all sinful Habits. Not that he alloweth the least Sin, whether Habit or Act; because all manner of obliquity is so contrary to his own Nature and Laws, that 'tis inconsistent with his Holiness to allow or favour any: But his Goodness is such, that he will not take advantage by every offence to punish us, provided our Offences be neither frequent, nor designed, nor of a gross and scandalous condition. 'Tis our love of him, and our imitation of his Holiness, that he is pleas'd with; and when we love and imitate according to our strength, and with zeal and constancy, he accepts of our daily endeavours, and pardons those defects, which he sees would not be in good men, if they were not (what Nature hath made them) Flesh and Blood. The
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Scripture speaks, of walking in the light, of being led by the Spirit, of working Righteousness, of following Holiness, of being the Servants of Righteousness, of yielding our selves unto God, of being zealous of good works, of being fruitful in every good work, of doing and cleaving to that which is good, and of keeping our selves unspotted from the World. By which and the like Expressions is meant, not that we must be absolutely perfect, without any sin or frailty, but that it is necessary for us to be continually given, and habitually addicted to the study and practice of Holiness; to make it our great work, business, and employment; so that the whole frame and tenor of our lives be suitable thereto, an abatement being made for human Weakness, and for unobserv'd Accidents and Misfortunes.

4. And this leads us on to a fourth degree of Holiness which is required of us, *viz.* That we be Universally Holy; or that we constantly practise all the parts and branches of Holiness, by an even, uniform, and impartial obedience to the Laws of it. As a good Action is made up of all the Properties, and is attended with all the Circumstances which

which the Rules of Morality require ; so is an Holy Life made up of all those Virtues which Christ's Religion calls for, such as the Apostle enumerates, *Phil. 4. 8.* *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report.* For God looks for integrity, singleness of heart, and simplicity of mind ; and in this a Religious man discriminates himself from the most pretending Hypocrite, that whereas they act occasionally upon a principle of slavish fear, or worldly interest, or for some other such sinister and mean ends, he evermore acteth upon an honest principle of love and reverence to God ; and the Rule is, that *quicquid propter Deum fit, aequaliter fit* ; whatever is done for God's sake, out of affection and regard to God, is done with equality of obedience, because the same Divine Majesty which hath commanded This thing, hath commanded That also : There is the same stamp of Authority upon all his Precepts ; so that if a man obeys one in the sincerity of his heart, to express his cordial subjection to God, whom he loves and serves in truth, there
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is no imaginable reason for him to deliberate, or stick at obeying all the rest, which carry the same Divine Impress which that single Precept beareth. The same Motive which induceth him to the performance of this Duty, is equally powerful to bend his Will also to that, and that, and so on; all being made necessary by God, whose power and authority is the ground on which he is drawn to comply and close with any. This is that perfection of Holiness which we must all attain unto in this life, and that which Divines are wont to call a perfection of parts, though not of degrees; meaning not an unfinning state, but entire, uniform, and universal obedience in some measure, or a complication of all Virtue. We may take an Idea of it from the condition of a New-born Infant, which hath all the necessary members, lineaments and features of a man, though it be many years before he grows up to the pitch and stature of a man; so are they who are born of the Spirit, made up of that compage and fulness of virtue in all its branches, which is necessary to constitute an Holy person; no essential Grace is wanting, though we cannot grow up to that high degree, as

to have no Infirmity mixed with our Virtues, *till that which is perfect is come, and that which is now imperfect shall be done away.* In the mean time we must *love the Lord our God with all our hearts*; not dividing them between God and the Devil, but applying them wholly to fulfil all God's Commandments, that our obedience to them may be equal, and all of a piece. Upon the same Principle we fulfil one, we must observe all, because the reason of obedience is one and the same to all; and when People make a difference between the Laws of God, and pick out some to keep, and some to disobey, 'tis a manifest sign they are guided in their choice, not by an upright heart, or by the love and fear of God, but by their carnal lusts; because the sins they cast away are more infamous, or less modest, or less advantageous, or less palatable, or less agreeable to their temper, than the Vices they reserve. Whence it follows, that such an unequal and piecemeal obedience can never bear the title of True Holiness, with what Garniture soever it may be set off; because the man that carries that uneven hand, notwithstanding all his Pretences and Flourishes, may be in a state of damnation: For the
words

words are exprefs, *Jam. 2. 10. Whofoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, (that is, wilfully) he is guilty of all.* Not as if a man can actually keep the whole, though he offend in one, (for that would be to keep all, and not all, which is a contradiction;) nor as if the formal breach of any one, is a direct breach of all the reſt (for he that is an Idolater, may be no Homicide; and he that committeth Murther, may not be guilty of Adultery.) But the Apoſtle's meaning is, That ſuppoſe a man to keep all the Commandments but one, the violation of that one is by interpretation the violation of all (as he that takes off but one ſingle Link, breaketh the whole Chain); and ſo, that he who deſignedly tranſgreſſeth in one point, is under a Curſe, *as well* as he that tranſgreſſeth in all. For God doth not ſo much regard the number of mens Sins, as the wickedneſs and malignity of their Hearts: 'Tis this that makes them conſtrued Violaters of the whole; becauſe it is not for want of inclination and will, but for want of occaſion and motive, that they break not every Law in the *Decalogue*: And therefore the improbity of mind which goes along with every ſingle Tranſgreſſion,

and through it, makes them as fully liable to damnation, as if they had transgress'd in every instance. What Philosophers say of Similar Bodies, that every part is of the same nature with the whole (for every crumb of bread, is bread, as well as the whole Loaf; and every drop of water, is water, as well as the whole Ocean) that we say of the Body of Sin; that there is *ὁμοιομέρεια*, a likeness of nature in every member thereof: *Omnia habent quod totum*, there is the same malignity in each part, that there is in the whole lump; and therefore when one immoral Action is done industriously, it renders a man a Criminal as well (tho I do not say as much) as if he had acted a great many more.

The result of this Point is, That we must be holy in all manner of Conversation, expressing our entire love to God by our impartial and uniform obedience to his Laws; by denying all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, with that integrity of heart which is necessary for Saints. Even ill men will obey in some instances: Witness *Herod*; he gave *John the Baptist* audience; he heard him gladly; he reverenc'd

renc'd his Person ; and was so wrought upon by the power of his Doctrine, and the strictness of his Life, that he did many things, saith the Evangelist, *Mark* 6. 21. but yet he would not part with *Herodias* his Brother *Philip's* Wife ; a plain argument, that he acted not upon a Principle of Conscience, and Religion, but upon some other motive, which made him do, not what was most requisite, but what was most consistent with his Lust, and most easie to be done. And such are those amongst us, who placing too much of Religion in the hollow of the Ear, keep some favourite Vice in their Bosom, which is unto them like a darling *Herodias*. One is very temperate, and at the same time an Oppressor ; another is just to men, but neglects Prayer ; a third prays often, but is proud and censorious ; a fourth fears an Oath, but lives in Adultery ; a fifth is as strict as the strictest *Pharisee*, but hateth his Brother. All Hypocrites are fond of some *Herodias* or other ; but, though they love to sin without being told on't, yet whatever that darling Vice be, it is not lawful for them to have it, because it is utterly incompatible with that purity of flesh and spirit, wherein true Holiness

doth consist. They love that which God hates, and 'tis that defiles them, though it be but a single Lust. That single one is an argument of a corrupt and filthy mind; and the reason why they sin not in other instances as well as in that, is, because they have not the same kindness for another Vice, nor the same temptations and motives to act it. It may be a Vice of a dry nature, as common Swearing is; and many ill men may forbear it, because it doth not carry that gusto with it, which is in Eating and Drinking. Or, if it hath some relish, it may be attended with such cost and pain too, as makes no compensation for the pleasure; which may be the sole reason of some mens Temperance and Chastity; because Drunkenness and Whoredom are not worth the charge, which usually comes by surfeits in the Bowels, and by rottenness in the Bones. Or, perhaps, the Vice they forbear is not so agreeable to their natural Constitution; as one may have but languid sparks of lust, when another hath consuming flames. Or else the sight of the Civil Magistrate's Sword may keep them in awe; or the overruling hand of God may defeat and disappoint their evil purposes: Many ways

it may happen, that one Sin may be omitted, when another is done ; but all this while he that hath an affection for any, is a Criminal, because his Heart is prepared, his Mind is bent, his Will is ready to commit any Sin whatsoever, provided it doth suit with his Temper, or gratify his Inclinations, or serve his Advantage ; 'tis only the want of provocations and motives, not the fear or love of God, that restrains him ; and so he is in the account of God a Transgressor of the whole Law, though not formally, yet virtually, by consequence and interpretation.

Therefore if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, Matth. 5. 29. The dearest Lust must be parted with ; and whatever is a direct means and instrument of moral pollution. Eschew thine own wickedness ; that which thy Temper, or Inclination, or Custom makes thy peculiar reigning Vice. And say not by way of excuse, It is but one. For a man may dye of one Wound, as well as by twenty. Neither slight it upon a pretence, that it is a little one ; for a prick in the Heart is as deadly, as a Gangrene in the Hand. Whatever the Vice be, whether complicated or single,

greater or less, God takes measures of it by a man's affections to it. His fondness of it, and committing it wilfully, with delight and approbation; 'tis this that conveys such malignity into an action, as makes the guilt of it increase; like the Cloud which the Prophet's Servant saw; at first it was in breadth like a man's hand, but soon grew to the dimensions of the Firmament; and the end of it will be such as *David* speaks of, *Psal. 11. 6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup.*

5. This being clear'd, That God expecteth of us such a measure of Holiness, as that we keep our selves unspotted from the world in all things, according to our capacity and power; I proceed now to the fifth and highest degree we can attain unto in this Life; which is, That we continue, persevere, and improve still in an holy course.

1. First, It is indispensably necessary, that having once escaped the pollutions of the world, *we return not with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire,* 2 Pet. 2. 22. The meaning of which Expressions

sions is, That we must be careful not to relapse, or fall back again into a state of sin; but *patiently continue in well-doing*, Rom. 2. 10. *Endure to the end*, Matth. 10. 22. *and be faithful unto death*, Rev. 2. 10. Apostacy is very dangerous, when men forsake their Vows, act against their former Convictions, and fall into a new love and league with those filthy Lusts, against which they had declared open enmity and war. In that case, *The latter end is worse with men than the beginning; It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them*, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. For by such shameful Relapses they do not only lose all the benefit of their former Labours, and render them altogether unprofitable and vain, but moreover they plunge themselves the deeper in the mire, and contract a greater guilt than that which was forgiven them at their entrance upon a course of sanctity; and by consequence, proportionably to that guilt they become liable to the greater severity and condemnation. *When the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations*

minations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in the trespass that he hath trespassed, and in the sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die, Ezek. 18. 24.

2. But secondly, It is not enough to have a care of Backsliding. God expects this measure of Holiness, that we improve and heighten our state all along from our spiritual Birth, to the day of our Dissolution; that we mortify our Lusts more and more; that we be still the stronger in the Lord, and in the power of his might; that we be every day wiser and better, perfecting Holiness continually. For the *Heights* of Sanctity are indefinite: there are no such bounds or limits set, that any man may think thus far he is to go, and no further. The Grave is the only place for Mortality to stop at; and as we are daily going thither, so we must daily mend our pace in our course of Holiness; nor can the greatest Saint on earth say, he is already Holy enough; because the Laws of Holiness are so very perfect, that we cannot exactly fulfil them, till we have worn off all our Infirmities; that is, till we die. *St. Paul* was one of the best
 Servants

Servants that ever the Lord Jesus had in the world ; and yet, said he, *I count not my self to have apprehended, (or compleated my course) but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Philip. 3. 13, 14.* He alludes there to the Contentions that were in the old Olympick Games, where the Combatants did not look back to see how many paces they had run, or how much of their Race they had gone through, but consider'd still what lengths were before them, and accordingly stretch'd and strained with vigor to finish their course, so as to obtain the Prize. And if *St. Paul* was carried on with such an active and industrious zeal, what strivings should not we use, who come so short of him ? who have run so little of the *Race that is set before us* ? and have such stages and distances to measure still ? The Scripture calls this, *growing in grace, and abounding in the work of the Lord* ; by which, and the like Phrases, is meant the progress we are to make daily in a course of Holiness, by *adding still virtue to virtue,*

tue, and one degree of grace unto another.

Such Progressions are necessary upon a double account; first for the Increase, and then for the Consummation of Holiness.

1. They are necessary for the increasing and advancing a state of Sanctity. For as wickedness grows gradually to an high head, (Natural Conscience must be smother'd, Modesty must be violated, all regards for Reputation, and the fear of Hell, must be overcome, before a man can be an accomplished Villain) so doth Holiness increase by parts and additions; and the growth of it is much the slower, by reason of those difficulties which attend one's first passage from a state of Nature, to a state of Grace. As those difficulties are not to be conquer'd, but by strong resolutions; so neither are the Virtues we resolve upon to be attained, but by exercise and use, especially so as to become habitual. Upon our diligent and constant practice, one Grace worketh and produceth another, and each helpeth to confirm the rest, and to raise them to an higher and more noble pitch. Shame and Sorrow, and Indignation for Sins past, and Repentance

penitance from dead Works, these are Initial Graces, the Beginnings of an Holy Life; and these being daily exercis'd, will serve to bring forth renovation of Heart, mortification of Lusts, purity of Spirit, and entire obedience of the Mind to the Will of God. Hence the man goes on to the excellencies of a Saint, and his Soul is every day more and more adorn'd with Humility, Charity, Piety, Meekness, Modesty, Goodness, and with an unfeigned love of Righteousness and Peace; which graceful endowments of the Soul being fixt and settled by daily use, are naturally productive of those heroick and victorious Habits, Patience, Constancy, Fortitude, Self-resignation, Contentedness with one's lot, and Universal Submission to the Divine Providence. Thus from regular, though afflictive and seemingly small Beginnings, we go on to a great state of Holiness; and as we proceed we grow, abounding in many excellent Virtues, which we should certainly want and miss of by sloth and idleness; by sitting still, or by standing at a stay, if standing at a stay were in this case possible.

2. Secondly, These Progressions are necessary as for the Increasement, so for the
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Consummation of Holiness. Then I reckon Holiness to be consummate, when a man comes to the last end, and to the farthestmost degree which he can possibly come to in this world; when he dies, striving against flesh and blood to the last gasp, and crowned with those Divine Acquisitions and Habits, which fit him for the fellowship of God, and of the Saints in light. Then is he perfect in the Scripture-sense, when he is improv'd to the utmost, and when Nature is polish'd as far as its condition and capacities will permit, the faculties and unavoidable infirmities of Humanity remaining still: This is Evangelical, tho' not Absolute Perfection. Now, that we may consummate Holiness, and perfect our selves by it, we must not stint our endeavours to this or that degree, as if our arriving to such a determinate pitch could serve to make us Holy enough; but as long as we live we must be on the improving hand, still we must be aspiring farther and farther, evermore reaching forward beyond our present attainments. This is to be our continual business and study, how to be better still; how to be more pious to day, than when we went to Bed; more charitable, more meek and
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condescending; more circumspect and upright in all our ways; more *fruitful in every good work, and increasing* (constantly) *in the knowledge of God*, Col. 1. 10. This is the ready way to that Perfection I now speak of, because by these gradual Improvements the Laws of Holiness become every day the more possible and easy; and the more he obeys, the more he consummates, and the fitter he is for that blessed place, where all are in glory, tho' all have not equal proportions of it. Every one's share there, is as his Perfections are here; and Perfection here doth not consist of just so many numbers and degrees, but is as the man's state is; as his Progressions are, so is his Perfection, less or greater, according to the quality and extent of his endeavours, and the measure of his days: still his Perfection is suitable to his state; and as this, so that improves. There are in the Church some Babes, such as are newly born of the Spirit; fresh Converts; Saints of yesterday; lately turn'd to God from an evil course. Their Perfection is their Repentance, thereby they are perfectly Converts; and if they die in that condition, I question not but the God of Mercy will admit

admit them into a suitable state of happiness. But where God gives more time, the most penitent people are bound to imploy it, by making all possible improvements. An Holy Life must actually follow their Repentance. Those Resolutions and Vows which were then inchoated, must terminate in direct practice. Every gracious Disposition must be carried on, and fixt in a strong Habit; and every Sin must be broken off by the exercise of its contrary Vertue; as Covetousness by Charity; Fraud by all manner of Justice; Excess and Riot by strict Sobriety; Malice by Love unfeigned and universal; and some other cases. This will set them in an higher Classis in the Church, among those that are Proficients; such as are come from Babes to the strength and stature of Men, whose Tempers are above every thing that is mean and low, sinful, base, and sordid. This is indeed a noble growth in Grace; but yet neither here must holy men stop. There is farther Perfection for them still; and that is, to make Piety and Vertue so natural (as it were to their minds, as to render every Sin morally impossible; so contrary to their ordinary Inclinations, that they strangle the thoughts of it in
their

their very birth. This is that degree of Holiness which St. *John* meant, when he said, *Whoever is born of God cannot commit sin*: He cannot do it without committing a Rape upon his Heart and Conscience; like the forcing of a pure Virgin, whose very thoughts are undefiled. By these great attainments we grow from men, to perfect men, which is yet an higher state; and even that admits not of bounds and limits: A *Paul*, that laboured more abundantly than the rest, must reach forth, and follow after, and press on till, until he finisheth his course. After all the noblest improvements there must be perseverance, caution, and an holy jealousy, as there was in him; lest he should become a Cast-away at last. The sum is this; to raise the Faculties of our Souls, and to improve our Nature so, that we may be partakers of the Divine Nature, and bear a greater and greater similitude of God; this is our work in this world. For ought I know, it may be our business in the other world too. For where there is an Infinite Object to be contemplated, admired, lov'd, and imitated, it can hardly be supposed, that Beings of limited Capacities and Powers (as all Crea-
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tures are ; especially such as are Descendants from a Man of Clay) can comprehend all that is good and excellent at once, though they be in Glory. And therefore it is probable enough, that even the Spirits of just men made perfect, do, notwithstanding the vast degrees of their Perfection, advance continually higher and higher in their knowledge and resemblances of God. But to let that rest : This Life to be sure is for exercise and improvements, because the Commandments of God are so very perfect and large, that they still afford us more work to do, whatever our present state be ; though every the least work and labour of love shall be accepted. Upon which account (that I may end this meditation in the words of a ve-

Bishop Taylor's Necessity of Repentance. ry Learned Writer of our Church) "We must still be contending and pressing forward ; and no man can say he does now comprehend, or that his work is done, till he dye ; and therefore for ever he must grow in grace. — Although God exacts not an impossible Law under eternal and insufferable pains, yet he imposeth great Holiness in unlimited and indefinite measures, with a design to give excellent proportions of
" Reward,

“Reward, answerable to the greatness
“of our Endeavours. Hell is not the
“end of them that fail in the greatest
“measures of perfection; but great de-
“grees in Heaven shall be their portion;
“who do all that they can always, and
“offend in the fewest instances. For as
“our Duty is not limited, so neither are
“the degrees of Glory; and if there were
“not this latitude of Duty, neither could
“there be any difference in Glory; nei-
“ther could it be possible for all men to
“hope for Heaven; but now all may
“hope: The meanest of God’s Servants
“shall go thither; and yet there are
“greater measures for the best and most
“excellent Services.

From which Point thus sufficiently
cleared, two things will now follow.

1. First, That a State of Holiness is
very possible, according to such a Rule
as the Divine Goodness will be well
pleased with. Do but look over what
hath been said, and the thing will plain-
ly appear. It is very possible to lead an
exemplary life, in the midst of a crooked
and untoward Generation; nay, to such
as give their minds and hearts to it, ’tis a
very easy and delightful thing: It is ve-
ry possible to refrain from that which we

know to be hateful to God, and contrary to his Holy Commandment. Where there is time to deliberate, and liberty to chuse, any man may act, or forbear, as he pleaseth; neither doth Grace take away, but restore the freedom of a man's Will. 'Tis very possible, notwithstanding ones Passions and Infirmities, to be a good man in the main; and whatever his Corruptions are, 'tis as possible to strive against them, and by degrees to make them less and less predominant, and to mend Nature, though he cannot think quite to destroy it. 'Tis very possible to love one Vertue as well as another, because all are amiable; and to practice all in some fair measure, and as occasion serves; for thousands have done it, and every Vertue is still the same, and every day the easier by use. 'Tis very possible to increase in goodness; as God shall prolong our Lives, to make them still the more and more exemplary; amidst our Failings to have growing Desires, and to express those Desires by multiplying our religious and honest Endeavours, that at the end of our Race we may be capable of the Crown of Righteousness, which is ready for all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. To say
these

these things are not possible, is to maintain Riddles and Paradoxes, which every one of common sense can contradict; and to do these things, is to be holy. Such a one is holy as God would have him be here; not as an Angel, but as a Man, that is compassed with Flesh and Blood. He is perfect in state, though not in degree; and every hour of his life he may comfort himself with this, That if he perseveres, he shall die well, rightly dispos'd and fitted for the Beatitudes and Holiness of Heaven.

2. And since we may be holy, it will follow, secondly, That we should use all our endeavours to be so actually, and not be so foolish, as to be our own hinderances, in a case where we are most concern'd to be vigorous and prompt. The prospect of a difficulty is oft more discouraging, than the trial of it; and many things at a distance look daunting, which we do not find so, when we come to examine and feel the condition of them. Holiness is a word, which at the first hearing carrieth a damp with it: It foundeth as if a man were to be stript; to be voided of all Pleasures; of all Business, but that one; of all Society, but God and his Angels; nay, of Nature it
H 3 self,

self, which is very hard to put off, till there is an end of mortality. And must I use my self thus, that I may be holy? Be remov'd and separate, as it were, into the Company of Spirits? No; there is no occasion for that, till the Earth will bear me no longer. Sanctity is consistent with our frail State; it may be in a Cottage of Clay; within Flesh, and Bones, and Skin, as long as there is no noisom corruption and rottenness at the Heart. You may be holy amidst your weaknesses; and you must be holy, or you are undone; that is, your mind, and desires, and endeavours must be set upon it; you must exert all your Faculties; you must shew your industry and power; you must act according to the rate of an upright, honest hearted man, and then God will accept you.

C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

AND this brings me to the consideration of that which in the beginning was proposed for the fourth general Head of this Discourse, *viz.* The Necessity of Holiness; how that appears, and whereon that is founded.

Now for the clearing of this, we may observe in general, That all the Promises of God belong to an Holy Life; either as Rewards of it, or as Helps and Encouragements to it. Indeed the great design of God in proposing to us the several parts of Religion is, that he may *purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Thus *the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned,* 1 Tim. 1. 5. That is, the scope of God's Laws is, to make us have universal Love, unpolled Affections, and clear Minds; and in order to all this, to make us have a true, vigorous Faith, as the leading Principle of Obedience. The same is the drift of the whole Gospel, *That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,* Tit. 2. 12.

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Now, because nothing is more apt to quicken our endeavours, than hope and expectation of great success, God hath added many inviting Promises, for the more sure promoting of the main business he hath in his eye. The increase of his Grace, the comforts of his Spirit, the protection of his Providence, our acceptance with him, and such other Blessings; they are tendered and held out to us, to encourage our honest Industry. For these Promises are conditional; how precious soever they be for their kind, and incomparable for degree, they depend upon our diligence for their accomplishment; and thus our Duty is necessitated, by having complicated with it an earnest Hope; and for our own Interest sake, that Holiness is made our choice and task, which otherwise we should not mind. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, John 13. 17. Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. 5. 20. In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him, Acts 10. 35. If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, 2 Pet. 1. 10.*

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By which, and abundance more places of the same strain, it appears first, That the Blessings promised come not by absolute destiny; like meer Boons, which are promiscuously distributed with an undistinguishing hand. For if they be Consequents and Liberalities of Fate, what need can there be of our doing any thing towards the obtaining of them? Upon that Supposition we are not concern'd to labour for them by perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, but only to enjoy the possession of them, without any fear of losing or coming short of them. The most that can follow from that Principle is, That 'tis necessary for God to bestow, but not for us to acquire them, because they are suppos'd to depend upon an uncontrollable Fatality; which directly takes away the necessity of making an Holy Life the Object of our Choice, and an indispensable *Medium*.

Secondly, it appears, That the practice of Holiness is not meerly an expression of Gratitude for mercies in view, and certain to be receiv'd. For if it be needful on no other account, Grace and Sin would be consistent; no Ingratitude, or other Crimes being able to defeat

feat a power that is irresistible, or to make absolute Certainties void. Or, say this principle doth not encourage Sin, I am sure it cannot necessitate Holiness; because constant experience shews, that the expectation of Acquiring operates much stronger than the remembrance of Receipts. Gratitude springs from Ingenuity, but Industry from a more powerful Principle, from a sense of Duty, and a prospect of Advantage. So that if Holiness be required only as a testimony of Thankfulness, all Endeavors after it will be superseded or weakened; especially if men think themselves for ever sure of God's Blessings, and if his Promises be presumed to be irrevocable, as well as unconditionate.

The Result therefore is, That the study and practice of Holiness is indispensably necessary, as the means of having the Promises of God made good to us. The Contents of them are not arbitrary Largeesses, but most gracious Allurements to an Holy Life, and Rewards of it: Things propos'd, to affect our Desires; to move and stir up our Wills; to excite our Industry; to sweeten our Labours; to invigorate our Spirits; to animate our Zeal; to accelerate our Progress

gress in an Holy course ; and so to raise, strengthen, and impregnate our Hopes ; because holy Beginnings, and agreeable Proficiencies, are the first Conditions, on the performance whereof the Promises of God are fulfilled, and no otherwise ; so that to depend upon them without Holiness is in vain, how confident soever a man's expectations and thoughts may be. For *the Hypocrite's hope shall perish, and his hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be as a spider's web,* Job 8. 13, 14. This in general.

But that I may proceed to some Particulars: There are *two* states chiefly, which all people who have a sense of Religion desire to attain to; a state of Pardon in this world, and of Glory in the next ; and in order to both these, competent degrees and measures of true Holiness are necessary.

1. First, 'Tis necessary for every one to be Holy, in order to a state of Pardon. By Pardon, I mean the Forgiveness of all Sins past, or the removing the Punishment they deserved.* And by a state of Pardon, is understood such a continuation of that Forgiveness, as that the pardon'd Person comes to be beloved by the Redeemer of all our Souls ; to be delighted

lighted in, and particularly favoured ; to be taken, as it were, into God's Bosom ; and to be entitled to the transcendent Rewards of Heaven.

1. Now, first of all ; Holiness is necessary for a man's entrance into this most comfortable state, for the very beginnings of it, and initial steps towards it. I do not say, Actual Holiness of Life is necessary in this case, because such a one may be suppos'd to have led a very evil life to that time ; but Holiness of Heart is absolutely necessary ; Purity of Mind ; Sanctity of Purpose and Intention ; or, the renouncing and forsaking of all Sin in Resolution and Vow. In this case, and at thy entrance upon a new state, in stead of antecedent works of Righteousness, Faith is accepted, provided it be lively and practical ; or, such a thorough perswasion of the Truths of Christ's Religion, as will (if God shall grant the man longer time) exert, shew and approve it self by a thorough Reformation. Nothing can be abated of this, because Pardon of Sin is never in all the Scripture tendred but upon Repentance, Conversion, Newness of Spirit, Transformation of the Mind, the *putting off the old man, and death unto sin*, and the like ;
by

by which various expressions is meant, the changing of one's Desires, Purposes and Inclinations, and the fixing of one's Heart upon a Religious course; *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*, John 3. 3. And Gal. 6. 15. *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* Where by a *New Birth*, and a *New Creature*, is signified a New Heart, New Affections and Resolutions; a New Bent, Frame and Disposition of Soul. So that 'tis not any empty, tho' never such formal Professions of Religion, that can entitle a man to God's Pardon; 'tis not Sighs, or Groans, or Tears; nor is it Prayer it self, or the use of any other Ordinances, though attended with the most solemn Absolutions of the Church; 'tis not all this, nor a great deal more, that can put one into a pardoned state, if this be all. There must be Purity in the Breast, an Holy Temper within; a Spirit new cleansed, and exalted into a singular condition, by the separation of it from the love of Vice and Wickedness; 'tis this must deliver it *from the wrath of God which is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, especially such men

men as *hold the truth in unrighteousness*,
Rom. 1. 18.

I suppose here the renewed Party to die; as it were at the Churches threshold; upon his entrance on an Holy Life; in that case his lively Faith, and sincere Repentance, by the mercy of God, serves his turn; especially, if he were a Proselyte from without, who wanted before sufficient, ordinary means of Grace and Salvation. He came in at his call, and went for the time as far as he could go, seriously vowing and resolving upon a new course; and therefore he must be presumed to dye in God's favour, *who accepteth every man according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12.

But, if he cometh short of Holiness of heart, he dies in a sad condition; because without Purity, either in act, or in desire, purpose, and resolution at least; that is, without true change of temper, there is no hope of forgiveness. For those gracious dispositions of Soul; Faith and Repentance, which are manifestly the conditions and means of Forgiveness, do imply, and virtually signify that sanctification of ones spirit, which I now speak of. It is familiar with the
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Scripture to include Consequents in Antecedents; and so it doth here. Faith imports a great deal more, besides believing, or assenting to a Doctrine. Divers other Graces are involved and wrapt up in it, because it is the parent of a large retinue. This appears by comparing these three Texts of Scripture: *Gal. 5. 6. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* In *Gal. 6. 15.* it is thus; *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* And in *1 Cor. 7. 19.* it is thus; *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.* You see, Charity, and renovation of mind, and universal Obedience, are all included in Faith, as the natural operations, consequents, and issue of it: And therefore they are equivalent terms, and all mean the same thing; which if you would express in one word, you may call it Holiness. In like manner, several things are comprehended under the notion of Repentance. Sorrow for sin is but a single act, though it be never so sincere and hearty: But because it is apt to produce many permanent habits, therefore it is taken

taken in Scripture to signify all in short. And hence it is variously exprest, *By the conversion of the soul ; by reconciliation unto God ; by turning from darkness unto light ; by putting off the old man which is corrupt ; by mortifying the deeds of the body ; by abstaining from fleshty lusts ; by being transformed by the renewing of the mind ; by purging the heart from an evil conscience ; by denying ungodliness ; by cleansing ones self from all filthiness of flesh and spirit ; by walking in newness of life ; by living unto God ; by cleaving to that which is good ; by doing righteousness ; by bringing forth fruits ; and by doing works that are meet for repentance.* Since then Faith and Repentance both are the limited Conditions of Pardon, and all these Consequents are involved and included in the Scripture notion of them ; the sequel must be, That an holy frame and disposition of Soul, an obediential temper of mind, is indispensably necessary in order to a state of pardon, even to the beginnings of it, and for ones entrance into it. This seems to be the least thing required ; and after all the long disputations about Justification, I see no possibility of denying this, unless men will take upon them to alter the Terms
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of the New Covenant, and for the sake of their beloved Opinions, will undermine the whole foundation of an Holy Life, which is the scope and design of all God's Oeconomy:

2. But besides this entrance into a State of Pardon, we must consider, Secondly, The continuation of it; or, the State it self; when he that was forgiven, is forgiven still; and he that was reputed righteous, is reputed righteous still; and so walks on, and perseveres in the favour of God, without forfeiting it by backsliding or interruption. This supposeth him to have time granted for the bringing forth of those Fruits which spring from a deep Repentance. And for the persisting in this State, those holy Vows and Resolutions of heart which were initial, now will not be enough. There must be actual holiness of life; or, an uniform obedience to God's Holy Commandments, by explicitly practising all those Virtues which lay folded up in the nature of Faith and Repentance. In short; 'Tis necessary to work all the other works of God, besides the work of Faith.

Here, lest you should suspect I intend to lay any undue stress upon our own

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Performances, I must intreat you to observe these three things, which I think very needful to be inserted, before I proceed any further upon this point.

1. That our most holy Actions have nothing of meritorious dignity in them, in order to forgiveness of Sins. This is evident at first sight: For how can that man merit a state of Pardon, whose very standing in need of forgiveness argues, that he has already deserved Eternal Death? But further; Divines observe, That a Work presum'd to be meritorious, must have these five Qualifications.

1. It must be at least commensurate to the Reward; which cannot possibly be in this case; because finite Actions can bear no proportion to deliverance from infinity of punishment; and much less to that infinite Felicity to which a Penitent is entituled by a state of Pardon. *Even the sufferings of this present time* (the patient bearing whereof is the most noble act of obedience) *are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18. 2. Secondly, Such a work must have absolute perfection in it; which cannot be supposed to be in us, whose holiest Actions call

call for mercy, and stand in need of an atonement, by reason of the various Infirmities they are mixt with ; and *whose righteousness* (in comparison of what it should be) *is as filthy rags*, Is. 64. 6.

3. Thirdly, Such a work must be purely one's own ; which cannot be said of our holy performances, who have nothing *in us that is good, but what we have received from the father of lights, who worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure*, Phil. 2. 13.

4. Fourthly, Such a work must be profitable to the party on whose account it is done ; which the holiest men on earth cannot pretend with the least colour ; *whose righteousness extendeth not to God ; but they must confess, when they have done all, that they are unprofitable servants*, Luke 17. 10.

5. Fifthly, Such a work must be not of debt, but unclaimed, and arbitrary ; which none can say our works are, to whose Services God as our Creator and Redeemer hath an undubitable right, and to whom God hath given such Laws as we owe all manner of obedience unto ; so that supposing we did all that is commanded us, we must acknowledge nevertheless, *that we did no more than what is our duty to do*, Luke 17. 10.

Upon these accounts all pretence of merit must be utterly excluded ; for however we act, or whatever we perform, in order to a state of Pardon , *still it is of grace ; not of works, lest any man should boast*, Ephes. 2.

2. You must note, secondly, That though actual holiness of life be necessary for the continuation of one's Pardon, 'tis only as a Condition, to dispose and qualify a man for it: Not a Cause that procures it by direct efficiency and operation ; but a preparative that removes all Obstacles out of the way, so that thereby we become capable and receptive of God's free Grace and Mercy to us. God requires habitual Holiness, that he may in the end fit us for a Life Immortal. 'Tis of his Goodness that he prescribes us Laws, and of his Goodness that he accepts us when we endeavour to keep them ; and so, the forsaking of our Sins, is but like Rebels laying down their Arms upon their Prince's Offers of Mercy ; tis for their own advantage and safety ; the thing that is requir'd of them, is not as that which deserves their Pardon, but as that Condition which capacitates them for it, and that which is the means and way to it.

3. Thirdly ;

3. Thirdly ; It is to be noted yet further, That however Holiness of Life helps us to a state of Forgiveness, it is always for Christ's sake ; still it operates through the Blood of Sprinkling, which was shed once for all upon the Cross ; and in virtue of that Intercession which Christ useth now in Heaven for us all. Tho we neither can, nor need go so far as to take his Righteousness to our selves, or to think it imputed to us so, as to be transferr'd upon us, and to become our own ; yet it must be said, that 'tis in consideration of his Merits, and upon the account of his voluntary and most perfect Obedience, that our own Sins are not imputed to us upon an Holy Life. *Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30.* that is, he is the meritorious Cause and Author of it.

These things being noted, I proceed now to demonstrate, That Actual Holiness of Life is an Instrument and conditional means of a state of Pardon, and upon that score indispensably necessary. And by what the Scripture speaks it seemeth clear, that as Faith it self avails us, so do all other Holy Acts in conjunction with it, tho' perhaps in a lower

degree, viz. as so many Conditions and Qualifications for our Forgiveness. *Faith worketh by love*; so do all other Virtues work in some measure along with Faith and perfect Holiness; being a Complication of all Graces, it must needs be a great Instrument of Pardon. But that I may single out that Virtue alone which I just mentioned, Love or Charity; Can any thing be clearer, than that this in particular is necessary as the condition and means of our Pardon at the hands of God? observe our Saviour's express words, *Mat. 6. 14, 15. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Which plainly shews, That tho' other Divine Virtues must concur, and go along with Love in company, yet that is more especially lookt for; it is a very requisite means, that which is necessary above all things for the covering or hiding of sins; however we understand those words of *St. Peter*, and *St. James*; whether of the covering other mens, or our own; tho' to interpret them of hiding one's own sins, wants not either good Authority or Reason.

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But to convince you yet further, That Charity in particular doth dispose a man not only for the Act, but for a state of Pardon, consult the Parable of the King, and his Servants, *Matth. 18.* he frankly forgave one upon his humble application, who yet would not be prevailed with himself to forgive another, but took him by the Throat, and cast him into Prison, notwithstanding all his most passionate Intreaties. And what followed that barbarous uncharitableness? why, his Lord recall'd the Pardon he had given him before, and used him just as he used his poor Fellow-servant; *He was wroth, saith the Text, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.* Then comes the use our Saviour makes of all, *v. 35.* *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* So, how? why, by revoking and cancelling your Pardon too, and by making the state of it utterly void; for therein lies the very life and soul of the Parable. This doth not argue any variableness in God's mind; for he is steady in his ways, and acteth still according to his own fixt Rule, To be merci-

ful to Penitents, and to be angry with Wretches that are inhumane and hard-hearted. Our Saviour's words shew, how necessary Brotherly Love is for those Pardons we want our selves, and for the keeping of us in the Divine Favour.

Not that Charity will suffice if it be alone. For though God is highly pleased when he sees in us that shining Beam of his own glorious Nature, yet there are divers other gracious endowments which he is much delighted with. Meekness, and Humility, and Self-denial, and all other sanctifying Habits, are Ornaments, which in the sight of God are of great price also. With Complacency he beholds them all; and his Favour, Mercy and Love is over all who by the entire practice of Virtue endeavour to adorn the Doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; and as long as they persevere in that course, they are in a safe state of Pardon.

Hence St. James concludes, *That by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*, Jam. 2. 24. Where by works, he meaneth actions, which have a natural excellence in them; Duties Evangelical; Habits of Christian Morality; Sobriety;
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Righteousness, and Godliness; Virtues, which are of eternal Obligation; great and visible Perfections of Humane Nature. And the sense of the Apostle is, That a man continueth in a state of pardon and remission of Sin, by the constant practice of these substantial things, attending and joined with Faith, and proceeding genuinely from it: for his purpose was not to shut Faith out, but to keep it from being in a solitary condition, by bringing in other perfective Graces to bear it company; so that to any man who looks well into his discourse, his meaning will appear to be this, That we are pardoned, not upon a barren Belief of the Doctrines of Christ's Religion, but upon such a Faith as is fruitful of works which are morally good; such a Faith as bringeth forth Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety; upon an obediential Faith, and faithful Obedience; which is one and the same thing in effect, if men will be content to speak Sense, and not to be humorous as to Phrases.

In the Apostle's days there was great Contention about some Works which were not good in their own Nature, about the Mosaical Ordinances, touching
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New Moons, Sacrifices, and other Ceremonial matters that were proper to the *Jews*; and especially about Circumcision. *St. Paul* calls these Observances the Deeds of the Law, the Works of the Law, the Righteousness of the Law; and by virtue of these things, none could hope for remission of sins, and therefore he utterly excluded them out of the great business of Justification. That he ascribes to Faith; that is, to the Gospel way, which the Lord Jesus had laid out; by believing and reforming too; by repenting from dead Works; by renouncing all the hidden things of Dishonesty; by yielding our members Servants to Righteousness unto Holiness, and by walking before God in newness of life. And, *God hath called us unto holiness*, saith *St. Paul*, 1 Thess. 4. 7. And, Eph. 2. 10. *We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.* We must not expect, after all this, to be justified by *Moses's* Law of Works Ceremonial, but by our Saviour's Law of Faith; which is, that *we should cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Thus *St. Paul* falls

falls in with St. James; and the sense of both, touching the necessity of performances Evangelical, is the same; and the result in short is this, *Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed*, Jam. 1. 25.

But let us consider the nature of the thing it self, and the truth is, Holiness of Heart and Life is such a fair resemblance of God's own Nature, that he cannot but be pleas'd with it, countenance and love it, where ever he finds it in his Creatures. Nor can we with any reason suppose him to be reconciled to those who are in a state of Sin, because it is so utterly repugnant to the perfect purity of his Essence and Mind. It is for this that he delighteth in himself; there is that Immaculate Holiness in his Nature, and that Immutable Rectitude in his Will, conformable to the everlasting Rules of Righteousness, which necessitates him to love himself, and to be infinitely happy in the fruition of himself. The glory of his Perfections was his enjoyment before ever men or Angels, or any thing else was formed; and those rational Creatures which partake
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of them, are more or less acceptable unto him, as those Perfections in them are higher or lower in degree. Accordingly God loves or hates; those Acts in him are proportionable to those qualities and dispositions of Soul which are in us. *With the pure thou wilt shew thy self pure*, Psal. 18. 26. that is, loving, kind and gracious. Because he is a most spotless and perfect Being, infinitely above all possibilities of the least pollution, and always acting as it becometh the transcendent excellence of his own Nature; he must needs be very gracious to those, and to those only who bear some similitude of his Sanctity, and proceed, as he himself doth, according to the Eternal and Holy Laws of Equity and Goodness. The Holy Psalmist grounds all the favour God bears to good men, upon the absolute rectitude of his own most blessed Nature, as the original reason of it. Psal. 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright*; meaning, that God loveth such, and none but such, because he is perfectly such himself. His own Divine Will is in all things exactly conformable to the unalterable Rules of Righteousness. And when he sees in men a Copy
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of this Original, a likeness of this his Righteousness, he beholds it with favour and complacency, with love and pleasure, because he beholdeth in them so much of himself. On the contrary, he looks upon all Iniquity with Frowns; 'tis an odious sight to him, because it is diametrically opposite to his own most glorious and delightful Perfections. Upon which account men must not think they are in a state of Pardon, as long as they continue in a state of Sin; it is impossible, the nature of the thing will not allow it; 'twould destroy the Holiness of God's mind, to be reconciled to people of Unholy hearts and hands.

In him is no darkness at all; that is, nothing that is impure: And the only way to partake of his Divine Nature, and to communicate with him in his Perfections is, to have a fair resemblance, some strokes and representations of his Holiness. St. John is positive, 1 John 1. 6, 7. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light (without mixture of impurities) we have fellowship one with another (or, as some think it should be read, with him; μετ' αὐτῶ, fellowship with God)

God) and then saith the Apostle, *the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin*; or puts us into a state of Pardon and deliverance from the guilt of all past Iniquities. You see that depends upon our partaking of God's Holiness: When we have fellowship with God, *Then doth the blood of Christ cleanse us from all sin.*

I press this the more, because we live in such an Irreligious Age, that many regard not the quality of their Lives; and some care as little what the quality of their very Faith is. However such bold Wretches may brave it now, I doubt not but a time will come when they will be glad of God's Pardon; nay, may cry for it in the bitterness of their Souls, when it will be too late. God forbid I should destroy any man's Hopes, especially at his last hour; because God's Mercies are infinite; and he alone, who is the Searcher of all Hearts, can tell, how mens Hearts are dispos'd when they are ready to drop into the Grave. But this is clear, That the Promise of Pardon belongs to those who *put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Every one that doth righteousness, is born of God*, saith the Apostle,

Apostle, 1 John 2. 29. And again, *He that doth righteousness is righteous*, 1 Joh. 3. 7. The meaning whereof you shall have in the words of our learnedst Paraphrast ; He that continues in all righteous Actions ; he that, not only in intention of mind, but actually performs the will of God, and that through his whole course of life ; or if he fail therein, returns again speedily by repentance ; this person, and none but this, is the Christian Righteous man ; He, and none else, is accepted by God as righteous under the Gospel.

Which should be enough, one would think, to terrify and awaken the most Presumptuous, and to stir us all up to integrity and sanctity of Life in an uninterrupted tenor, lest at the end of our days we presume upon Promises that belong not to us. And yet how often doth it happen, that after a long trade of Vice, Impiety, and Irreligion, men possess themselves with confident persuasions of the favour and forgiveness of God, when they come to die, because our Saviour said to the Thief upon the Cross, *To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*?

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Now that Thief was a singular Instance of Repentance; and his Case is no Rule for those who have been bred up in the knowledge of the Truth, and have the Holy Commandments before them, together with the inward Aids of Divine Grace to assist their Obedience: 'Tis uncertain, whether he was a *Jew*, instructed out of God's Law; or an *Ethi-
nick*, bred up in that Religion which common Reason and natural Conscience taught. 'Tis uncertain when he first heard of Christ, or knew any thing of him. 'Tis uncertain when his Repentance began, whether on the Cross, or some time before. For though 'tis said plurally, in *Matth. 27.* that *the thieves reviled him*; yet the singular number might be intended, of *one of the thieves*; as St. *Luke* relates it, *Luke 23.* But this is certain, That the Faith of that Penitent Thief was extraordinary, without Parallel or Example in that Age, and impossible to be match'd in this. When the Lord was now hanging on the shameful Cross, ready to expire, derided by the Priests and Populace, and forsaken in a manner by all his own Disciples; then in the height of his Ignominy and Distress, he own'd him to be a
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King, and exerted his Incomparable Faith by the greatest Acts that one in his case could possibly perform; by reprehending the other Malefactor; by proclaiming our Saviour's Innocence; by acknowledging his own Guilt; by imploring the Lord's Favour; and by casting himself upon his Power and Goodness, when he should come into his Kingdom. His Faith, which was thus Extraordinary, was rewarded with Extraordinary Mercies. But, how is this a Precedent for us, who are not capable of acting, as that Thief did, now, when the Lord Jesus is sitting in Glory on the Right Hand of his Father? Or, what encouragement is all this to them who live in the habitual breach of their Baptismal Vow? throw aside the Decalogue, and the Creed too? slight the Ordinances of Religion? give themselves up to Ungodliness and Immorality? and run on in an evil course without remorse, till Death puts a stop to a career which otherwise would hold on still? The Thief upon the Cross will rise up in judgment against such Wretches, and will condemn them; for He repented in good earnest, and in time; These sin on to the last; put off
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their Conversion as a sad Work, fit only for a Death-bed ; and then seem to lament, and mourn, and to be disquieted at heart for this reason chiefly, because they cannot sin any longer.

To end this Point; An Holy Life is the ordinary course for every man's Pardon, the ordinary means and condition of it, the ordinary way to it ; and to trust to Mercies extraordinary, is as if men expected, that God should every day do Miracles for them. And therefore, as you hope for remission and acceptance at the hand of God, this must be your great care, *To work out your salvation with fear and trembling, while it is called to day ; To be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; To have your heart sprinkled from an evil conscience ; To lead your whole life as it becometh the Gospel ; To walk worthy of God unto all well-pleasing ; To be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of that great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

AND this brings me to the next Consideration, touching the Necessity of Holiness, in order to a future state; a state of final Pardon, and of eternal Glory; *Without Holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Hebr. 12. 14. It is God's peremptory and unchangeable purpose; and did we consider it only as his revealed Decree, methinks it should frighten us from depending upon any secret one; and should make us look to our own ways, instead of prying into God's hidden Counsels, to find our Names written in the Book of Life. An Artifice which some use, to render their own Souls not holier, but luckier than other mens, and to canonize themselves in spite of an Anathema.

When our blessed Saviour came into the world, he brought many Laws with him to give Mankind, the design whereof was to prepare and fit us for a future state. He was the only Lawgiver that ever descended from Heaven, and knew the condition of the place. The only Lawgiver that came forth from the Father, to tell the world what he had seen

with the Father. Therefore as we are sure that none was ever so fit to shew us what we are to do, that we may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; so we may be confident, that what he hath shewed us, is the way to it; no more than what was necessary for him to tell us, that he might make people ready for God; that he might prepare them unto glory; that he might fit them for his Father's Kingdom; that he might make them *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*. For those Duties which God now requires of people by him, are not meer arbitrary performances which God hath a Right, by virtue of his Sovereign Power and Authority over all, to exact of us for the exercising of our Obedience: But they are proper, congruous means, which he was pleased of his great goodness to propound, to dispose and qualify us for that Bliss which he offers unto all: so that *without Holiness no man shall* or can *see the Lord*; neither will God's Decree, nor the nature of the thing allow it. Hence it was, that when our Saviour began his Sermon on the Mount, he declared what sorts of men are to be blessed; that *the poor in spirit shall have the kingdom*

kingdom of heaven ; that such as mourn shall be comforted ; that the meek shall inherit the earth, (as well as glory ;) that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled ; that the merciful shall obtain mercy ; that the pure in heart shall see God ; that the peace-makers shall be his children ; and that the kingdom of heaven is theirs who suffer patiently for righteousness sake. By which account we see, that these heavenly Virtues are not only exacted, as Duties fixt by God's Authority and absolute purpose, but are moreover prescribed as suitable Preparatives to an happy future state, to render us capable of, and rightly condition'd for eternal Bliss hereafter. The design of them is, to refine our tempers ; to sublimate that which is gross and earthly in us ; to carry off our Corruptions ; to spiritualize our Natures ; and so to dispose us for the felicities of Heaven, into which we should not otherwise be fit to be admitted, though there were no Decree to keep us out, like the flaming Sword that kept the first man out of Paradise.

For this reason it is highly necessary for us now, in the time of this mortal life, to cleanse our selves from all filthi-

ness of flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness still more and more. And because I take this for a Point of very great consequence and use, I shall, for the exemplifying of the matter, consider a Future State of Glory under a twofold Notion, 1. *First*, as a State of Perfection; and 2. *Secondly*, as a State of Pleasure; and in both these respects, I shall shew that Holiness is necessary in order to it.

1. *First*, 'Tis necessary in order to it, as it is a State of Perfection. The condition and quality of the next Life, is sometimes described by Perfection, as 1 Cor. 13. 10. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* And the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, speaking of the Souls in Bliss, calls them *the spirits of just men made perfect*, Hebr. 12. 23.

For the opening of this thing clearly, we must enquire, 1. *First*, Wherein the Perfection of a Future State doth consist. 2. *Secondly*, What are the direct means of attaining unto it. Which two things being rightly understood, it will then easily appear how necessary Holiness now is in order to a Perfect State.

1. *First* then, the Perfection of a Future Blessed State must needs consist
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in the most regular and intense exercise of all the Faculties and Powers of the Soul. All Perfection is according to the nature of the thing; which is then said to be perfect in its kind, when its Faculties are complete; so that they fully answer the ends of their Formation. Now that Noble Being, a Man's Spirit, consisting of Three Faculties or Powers, the Understanding, the Will, and the Affections, (that is, a power to know, a power to chuse and act, and a power to desire, love, fear, and the like) the Soul is then perfect, when these several Powers are employed upon their proper Objects, after a most lively and orderly manner. This we may see, by observing how we increase in Perfection even in this world : For as we grow in knowledge, so is the Intellectual Faculty perfected. As we chuse that which is good, and go on in doing those things which are *honest, pure, just, lovely, and of good report*, so doth one's Will come to a perfect State; and when we duly command and govern our Affections, placing them upon suitable and proper Objects, and using them after a regular and manly rate, then are they perfected also. When the whole Soul is in a good frame, acting as

it becomes a Rational Being, then is it in a perfect condition, agreeable to its nature, and answerable to those ends for which it was created. And this we may call Initial, and Comparative Perfection ; Initial, because it is preparatory to an ever-blessed State ; and Comparative, because it is a very high pitch that such a Soul is already arrived to , if compared with its condition in the days of Infancy and Non-age , and if compared with the State of a Soul that is in an improvident Wretch's keeping ; though still it be clogg'd with many Infirmities, by reason of its habitation in flesh and blood,

Now by this Initial, Comparative Perfection in this life, we may take some measures of that in the next, which is Final and Absolute, because it is endless, and free from human Weaknesses, all culpable Infirmities being now done away. This must be the utmost Perfection in Knowledge, the utmost Perfection in Virtue, and the utmost Perfection in the lower Faculty too ; or a perfect Harmony, Order and Vigour of Affection towards God, *the Father of Spirits* : For the Soul loseth not its Faculties and Powers by parting from the Body,

Body, they are essential to it, inseparable from it, and as Immortal as the Spirit it self is, which is nothing but a thinking, active Substance without matter. Therefore its Faculties must necessarily remain after Dissolution; nay, they become vastly the quicker and the more active, by being rid of their old clog; so that when a Soul goes into the glorious World above, *among the spirits of just men made perfect*, and there meets with Objects that are transcendently attractive and ravishing, and with nothing but what is so; those Faculties which were so dull before, while immured in a mass of clay, cannot but be exercis'd after a most sublime, intense, and perfect manner.

Hence St. John tells us, that *we shall see God as he is*, 1 John 3. 2. And St. Paul, that *we shall see him face to face*. 1 Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known*: meaning, that in Heaven the Soul enjoyeth a quick, clear, open and comprehensive Vision. Here our sight is but dim; the light we have we gather with great labour, and by degrees out of Books; out of the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and out of the

the Volume of the Creation; and through these we look as through a Perspective, which yieldeth, comparatively, but little glimpses, and a dark view. There we shall see the brightness of his Glory; there we shall behold the beauty and lustre of his Nature; there we shall discover his wonderful and adorable Perfections; there we shall perceive with open eyes those stupendious Mysteries, which now puzzle and confound us; there we shall understand the manifold and great Reasons of his Providence, which now seem such Riddles to us; there we shall clearly see the true Originals of all his Works, the Depths of his Counsels, and how Wise and Good, how Powerful and Righteous, how Merciful and Gracious, how Faithful, Holy and True the Glorious God hath been all along from the beginning of the World.

And as our Knowledge will be perfect then, so also shall our Wills be; *for we shall be like him*, saith the Apostle, *1 John 3. 2.* We shall be like him in Holiness, as well as in Bliss; we shall bear a resemblance of the beauties of his Nature; we shall have entire rectitude and purity of Mind; we shall for ever
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admire and imitate the great pattern of Righteousness ; we shall still act with exact conformity to his most Holy Will ; we shall eternally follow his Mind without the least Deviation, Hesitancy , or mixture of Indifference ; our Appetites will be everlastingly under a Law, which will draw Obedience from us with an Angelical Freedom ; the Divine Nature will be our delightful Rule ; our Souls will be wholly fixt upon God ; and we shall partake of all his Perfections, as far as the Capacities of Creatures will be able to comprehend them.

Our Affections will be perfect also, steddily govern'd by the most charming Idea's which perpetually spring from that Infinite Being, who is Love it self ; the mirrour and perfection of it. For *Charity* (or Love) *never faileth*, 1 Cor. 13. 8. It will be our work in Heaven, when the works of Faith and Patience, and a great many more, will be over and at an end. We shall *love the Lord our God with all our hearts*, with affections still streaming out towards him, and incessantly enlivened by reciprocal Emanations, from that inexhaustible Fountain of Goodness and Benignity. Our Souls will for ever feed upon the Delights at his

his Right Hand; our Spirits will be transported with Divine Exercises; with Adorations, Praises and Hallelujahs to everlasting. Our Ardours will be like the old Fires upon the Altar, that were never to go out; every fresh Ray from God's glorious Majesty, will be fresh Fuel for our Affections; and we shall continually serve God with such reverence as those Angels were seen to express, *Rev. 7. 11, 12. They fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen.*

2. Seeing then this will be that State of Perfection which is to be the Portion of the Saints in light, a State of perfect Knowledge, of perfect Goodness, and of perfect Love; the next Enquiry is, What are the direct means of attaining unto it? Now this we may soon perceive, by observing how we grow in that Perfection here, which is initial and preparatory to that most perfect State. Those little Perfections we have, we acquire by exercise and use, and by the blessing of God upon our constant practice. They come not by Instantaneous Infusion,

Infusion, all at once, but by the daily repetition of many Acts, which gradually turn into perfect Habits. They are the Results of long Industry, and grow greater and greater, in proportion to those diligent endeavours we use for the acquisition of them. The more we contemplate, the more we know, and the more capable we are still of knowing. The more we command our unruly Wills, the easier they are to be governed. And the more we regulate and order our Affections, the fitter we shall be for the fruition of God when we come to die. The ready way therefore of arriving at last to Perfection in Heaven, is to proceed daily in the practice of those perfective Virtues, which lead us onward, and dispose us for an absolute State of Glory : And those people do most wretchedly deceive and abuse their Souls, who go on now in a course of Irreligion and Dishonesty, upon a presumption that if they beg God forgiveness when they are going out of the World, he will receive them into his everlasting Habitation, where they shall be presently perfected. This I take to be a very deluding Imagination for these two Reasons.

1. *First,*

1. *First*, Because Heaven is represented in the Holy Scripture, as the place where we are not to begin, but consummate a good State; the place where we are to receive our Penny, not enter upon our Labours; the place where we are not to start, but finish our course; the place where we are not to fight, but triumph. And the meaning of all this is, that if we hope for Perfection another day, we must so direct our Lives, that by proceeding from one Virtue to another, and from one degree of it to an higher, we may at the end of our days be duly prepared and fitted for a most perfect condition.

2. *Secondly*, In the place *where the tree falleth, there it shall be*, Eccles. 11. 3. which may be well understood to mean, That as the state of one Soul is (for the quality of it) at the hour of Death, so it will continue. For what can change it, when the time of working is now at an end? Suppose a man leads an ill Life, gives his mind to it, loves and delights in it, and by this means makes Vice habitual to him, and so dieth; How can Death alter the condition and frame of his Soul? We find by daily experience how very difficult it is to be rid of old,
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radicated Habits; 'tis like shifting ones Nature; and hence is that of the Prophet, *Jer. 13. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also learn to do well, who are accustomed to evil:* And yet in this Life such People have many useful Books to instruct them; the Examples of Good men to upbraid and admonish them; the Ministers of God to warn and direct them; and the Grace of God to assist their honest Endeavours. And if, notwithstanding all this, people will still follow their own hearts Lusts, and go on in those evil ways they have been used to, with what reason can we suppose the state of their Souls to be changed, and their Spirits to be quite renewed in another World, where all these Advantages fail, and are wanting? 'Tis true, before a Wicked man dies, he cannot chuse but have many great regrets of mind, and joltings of Conscience; because these are the natural Consequents of Sin; especially if he believes and thinks of a Future State. And when his Soul is departed, it must needs have, not only torments from without, but unspeakable anguish within it self, for the damned, desperate Condition 'tis brought to
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after all. But this doth not argue, that all its wicked Dispositions are gone. That's the thing I consider now, those Evil Inclinations remain still, together with the Worm that was bred on Earth, and never dieth in Hell. When a Soul departs from the Body, there seems nothing new to it but this, That it passeth out of one World into another; into a new World indeed, but not into a new State; it being unconceivable, how so many Habits, which have been long contracting, can be quite put off in the twinkling of an eye; how at a gasp or two it can be transform'd, renovated and rectified in all its Faculties; especially if it be consider'd with what regrets it goes off, and with what strong wishes that it might continue still in its former course; not willing to go, but forced out of its old Habitation, because its House can entertain it no longer, after all the infection it hath taken in it.

The perfecting of a Soul supposeth something done towards it already in a considerable measure. 'Tis not to begin a new thing, but to supply all manner of defects; and to add the highest pitch to degrees that were imperfect *before*. And hence the necessity of Holiness in
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this Life appears, because without it our Souls cannot be capable of Perfection. All the Powers of them must be improv'd now, and there must be in us such a similitude of God, as shall want nothing, when we come to die, but God's own blessed hand to make it his complete Image: *Our conversation is in heaven*, saith St. Paul, Phil. 3. 20. meaning, that they led an heavenly kind of life. Some would read it, We are Citizens of Heaven; understanding the Apostle to allude to those who are Members of a Society, enjoying the same Priviledges, and observing the same Laws, though they are Denizens that live at a distance. So are we all by Vocation, and should be in Fact, Fellow-Citizens with the Saints above, acting after that manner as they do. Though our present Condition be vastly inferior to theirs, yet our Conversation must be such as becometh those who belong to that Blessed Society, *the Spirits of just men now made perfect*. And then indeed are we in a right state, when the Pollutions of the World are done away; when our sinful Lusts are mortified; when we are pure in heart and life, according to our present capacities; when

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we practise all the Laws of Holiness, and carry with us those Virtues to the Grave, which will be crowned in Heaven; raised there to the most exalted pitch, and the most perfect degree of Contemplation, Obedience, Vigor, Spirituality, Veneration and Love of God.

CHAP. VI.

HAVING thus consider'd the Necessity of Holiness, in order to a Future State, as it signifieth Perfection: I am in the next place to shew, how indispensably requisite it is in order to a Future State of Pleasure. And that I may proceed distinctly upon this Point, I must

1. *First*, Consider the Notion of Pleasure in general.

2. *Secondly*, Enquire into the Nature of that pleasure which is at God's Right Hand.

3. And then, *Thirdly*, draw down this Meditation so, that it may enforce the practice of true Holiness in this life, to capacitate our Souls for the infinite delights of another.

1. *First*

1. *First* then, I take Pleasure here for an Act of the Soul, distinguishing it from objective Pleasure, or the thing that is delectable; and so it is an inward complacency and satisfaction in the enjoyment of that which is agreeable to the Appetite. For the Illustration hereof we must note, that three things must concur to make up Formal Pleasure. There must be first, that which is suitable and corresponding to the Desire: for if the thing be disagreeing, it cannot possibly afford satisfaction or delight. There must be an Object that excites the Faculty, that invites it to crave; that gratifies it, and that answers its motions and breathings after it, by yielding something that suits with the appetite. All sensitive Pleasures arise from the Gratifications of an Animal, when it enjoys that which is proportionable to its Sense, Fancy, and Natural Inclinations. And so do all those Pleasures which are proper and peculiar unto man, spring always from such Idea's as are consistent with his Reason, and from such Offers as are adapted unto, and comply with his Rational Appetite. Whatever he hates, or is averse to, he is so far from taking any pleasure in, that the more he sees of

it, the more uneasy and impatient is his mind. 2. For the creating of Pleasure, there must be Fruition also. For though Expectations be attended with Delight, especially if they be strong, yet that ariseth from some sort of Enjoyment, because Hope carries with it something of the substance of the thing we hope for; 'tis Fruition in a less degree; a Pledge, Earnest, and Foretaste of more to come. Some kind of Possession is necessary for Pleasure, because it applies the Object to the Desire, and makes that Union between it and the Soul, which is the immediate ground of all satisfaction; for how can a man be pleas'd with that, which he neither hath, nor believes it likely or possible for him to enjoy? 3. *Thirdly*, Besides all this, there must be a quick and grateful sense of the enjoyment; for perception is the life of all. Inanimate Bodies are at rest in their Centre; but this Acquiescence is without the least touch of delight, because they have no power of Sensation. All Vegetables, Plants and Trees, have what is agreeable to their Faculties, the juice and moisture which they suck out of the earth with greediness; but they have nothing of pleasure, because they want
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that apprehension of their fulness, whereof all delight is the natural product: And so it is with men who have no kindly feeling of their Acquests, let them possess all that their hearts can desire, and their faculties crave for, as long as they have not so much sense of it, as to be gratified, taken, humour'd and affected with it, they are in a manner as void of pleasure as stones and stocks; not by a thousandth part so happy as the Fool himself is in his Imaginary Paradise.

In short, all Pleasure is the result of agreement; there must be an agreeable object, an agreeable enjoyment of that object, and an agreeable sense of that enjoyment, or else there cannot be any pleasure and delight, to be sure not that state of pleasure which is natural for us all to aspire unto.

2. This being so certain and manifest, we must now in the second place enquire, What may be that state of pleasure above in Heaven, that we may know the better what is necessary for us to do, that those delights may be every way agreeable to our Souls, both as to their nature and quality, and as to their fruition and perception of them?

I need not tell you here, that the pleasures of the other world are not sensual, arising from such enjoyments as betray us now ; such as hurt the Soul by soliciting the carnal part in us, and by fulfilling mens brutish Lusts. The glories of Heaven are too sublime for any thing that is gross ; there *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels of God*, void of every thing that is impure or sensual ; and though at the Resurrection their Bodies shall be restored to them, yet neither then can flesh and blood inherit God's Kingdom, but all manner of corruption and carnality must be put off ; this lump of earth must be refined and spiritualiz'd ; nor shall there be any room for objects or delights that are foul. This is evident to all that can distinguish a Celestial from a Mahometan Paradise, and are not resolv'd to exchange the Creed for an Alcoran.

Nor may we conceive, that the pleasure of another life consisteth meerly, or chiefly in an everlasting state of Rest ; or in perpetual freedom from all manner of toil, trouble and misery. Indeed such a state is absolutely necessary in order to perfect felicity, and the enjoyment of it
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must needs be of infinite satisfaction: But then this satisfaction and delight ariseth from a sense and apprehension of the thing, and from reflection of thought. Of it self it is nothing but privative happiness, that is, absence of misery; and Rest alone, nakedly consider'd, without any sense or perception of it, can afford the Soul no more pleasure, (no, not in another world) than what its old partner, the body, enjoyeth in the grave, after all its labours and sufferings under the Sun.

The truth is, 'tis much easier to tell what is not in Heaven, than what there is. For, besides that our faculties are as yet too dull and narrow to comprehend all the parts of those positive felicities which are there, God has thought fit in his Wisdom to conceal from us a particular and exact account of that blessed state, and to acquaint us with so much of it as is necessary to exercise our Faith, to encourage our Patience, and to raise our desires and longings after a fullness of joy, by the grateful and exciting relishes we find at our present tasting. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be,* 1 John 3. 2. that is, it is not yet fully manifested; and the Revelation we have,

is so disproportionable to the Vision we shall have, that our knowledge, as to all the particulars of a future happy state, is comparatively little better than what children in the womb have of the condition of this world.

However, *we know in part*, 1 Cor. 13. 9. And by what may be collected from the Scripture, and the soundest reasonings out of it, I conceive the pleasures of Heaven may be reduced under these two general Heads: 1. *First*, such as spring from a sense of happiness from without the Soul. And 2. *Secondly*, such as consist in its operations within; both which being rightly consider'd, argue the necessity of Holiness in order to their enjoyment.

1. *First*, Some pleasures there arise from a sense of Happiness from without the Soul. The ravishing splendor of the place is the least thing to be consider'd, though the description of it might swallow up our conceptions now; and therefore, though we are told of a third Heaven, of a Paradise, of the excellent Glory, and of many Mansions in God's House; yet, what that lustre is, how radiant, and what proportions of Glory are in each Mansion; these things are not

not revealed. *St. Stephen saw the glory of God, and Jesus at his right hand; and we may be sure that if utter darkness be one of the punishments in Hell, transcendent light is one of the comforts in Heaven; and to this purpose Divines are wont (at least by way of accommodation) to apply those words, Rev. 21. 23. The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof: only observe what follows, ver. 27. There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.*

Our Saviour represents the Joys above, in part, by seeing *Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the kingdom of God, Luke 13. 28.* and elsewhere he expresseth them, by being in *Abraham's bosom*, and by sitting down (as at a Feast) and by eating and drinking together at *Christ's Table*. Which Phrases import a distinct knowledge of the Souls in Bliss; such as those Apostles had of *Moses and Elias* at our Lord's Transfiguration; nay, they imply a Divine Familiarity and Communion between them, their Knowledge now being enlarged to such an high degree,

gree, that they know, even as they are known. Though Bodies cannot act upon Spirits by any direct and immediate strokes, a Spirit being uncapable of gross impressions from matter ; yet one Spirit can act upon another ; as God doth, when he imparts his Will to the Holy Angels, to execute it ; nor do I question, but all beatified Spirits have ways, tho above our present dull apprehensions, of communicating their minds to each other (as *Lucifer* did to his Confederates at their Apostacy) and of maintaining Divine Intercourses between them. And certainly, the pleasure must needs be, to such Souls as are prepar'd for it, beyond expression, to be joined to that general Assembly of the Church ; to be with all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Saints, from the beginning, besides the innumerable Company of Angels : To behold all those, who by their Faith, Doctrines, Examples, and Sufferings, have been the means of bringing us to a blessed State too ; to be eternally conversant with those glorious Souls ; to be in fellowship with them inviolably ; to be united to them in the closest affections ; to be of one mind, and of one heart with them ; and to be knit together in

in one common work, of adoring everlastingly that Great God and Saviour, who so loved us all, and gave himself for us.

And how ineffable and infinite must that Delight be, to see him at last, who is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the God-man, Christ Jesus? to be with him whom our Soul loveth? to see him, who endured the Cross, attended on now with Cherubims and Seraphims of Glory? to see him, who was derided and rejected by the *Jews*, distributing now the Rewards of Eternity? crowning the Hopes of all his faithful Servants? saving all to the uttermost who came unto God by him? triumphing over his, and his Churches Enemies? and holding in his hands the Keys of Death, and of Hell.

These Pleasures come from without the Soul; because they spring immediately from Objects which are extrinsecal. There are others which arise immediately from within; and they are those Beatifick Acts and Operations which the Soul exerciseth with delight and sprightfulness; being now in a state of Separation from that heap of Earth and Filth which before did cast such a damp upon
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its Faculties : These must be suitable to the Nature of those Powers which the Soul exerteth to the utmost in a state of pure and undistracting Spirituality ; and are accordingly manifold and various.

The bright and ravishing Conceptions a blessed Soul hath of the Divine Majesty ; the View it enjoyeth of his Glorious Nature ; the Insight it's blest with into God's Attributes and Perfections ; the clear Apprehensions it hath of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead ; of the Union of two distinct Natures in the Person of Christ ; and many more Mysteries, which at present confound our weak Understandings, because they are above our Capacities, and therefore are hid, and reserv'd for a perfect State : These Intellectual Acts will carry such a quick sense with them, as cannot but affect and transport the Soul with the highest satisfaction ; nothing in this present Life being so universally delightful, as Knowledge ; though comparatively it is none ; and though the little we have is got with sorrow, like that which cost our first Parents their Paradise.

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Those Moral Acts which are more peculiarly ascribed to the Will and Affections, as, Acts of Piety, Goodness, Love, and the like, yield such sweetness to the Soul, even in this valley of Tears, as must be transcendent in those Happy Regions, where every operation of the Soul is pure, unmixt, and free from all alloy of Grief or Trouble, of Pain, Misery, and Distraction. God in his wisdom hath so formed that Rational Being, the Soul, that 'tis capable of all felicity in the enjoyment of himself, and in nothing else; having endued it with Faculties which are naturally apt to return him Acts of Homage, answerable for kind and quality to the Excellencies of his own most glorious Essence; as 'tis said of an Ancient Statue in *Egypt*, that it reverberated Musical Notes, as it was struck by the Rays of the Sun darting upon it. The infinite Greatness of God's Majesty, is productive of Adoration; his Ubiquity, of Reverence; his Wisdom, of Acquiescence; his Faithfulness, of Reliance and Trust; his Power, of Obedience; his Righteousness, of Conformity to his Will; his Holiness, of such Purity as is answerable; his Goodness, of the most ardent, and intense Affection; and All,
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are productive of Praises, and Thanksgivings to everlasting. And seeing the Powers of the Soul are not extinguish'd by its departure hence, but become thereby the more active, vigorous, and exerting all those Acts which are proper for a State of Bliss and Perfection, must needs be exercis'd with the highest pleasure and delight there, where the Divine Glory appears in its full splendour. 'Tis this that makes it Heaven indeed; namely, the sublime capacity the Soul is then in, of operating as becomes such a Ray of the Divinity, without the least incumbrance, molestation, or impediment. 'Tis this that makes it such a state of Pleasure; to see God as he is; to act as he pleaseth; to love as he loveth; to admire, worship, and magnify him with alacrity, according to his Excellent and Super-eminent Greatness.

And hence it will appear, how necessary Holiness is in order to this most delightful State. For all Pleasure being *the result of Correspondence and Agreement* between the Object and the Mind, how can it be possible for people of un-sanctified hearts, to find any delights there where every thing is so inconsistent with, so repugnant and contrary unto their Desires

Desires and Inclinations? Such a manifest Contrariety there is now; and since (as hath been shown) *Death* doth not so alter a man's whole Temper, as to divest him of all his old Habits, and to reconcile him to things against which he was at enmity before, how can a Spiritual and Divine State suit with Carnality? How can Carnal Minds like it? How can they be fit to enjoy it? How can they have any grateful sense of the Enjoyment? Should we suppose Impossibilities, and imagine one so utterly indisposed for a State of Happiness, to be pulled into it at last by a violent fatality; what would Heaven yield him, but regret and torment, which yet cannot be fancied there without a contradiction? What could the very Place afford him for his delight? or what satisfaction could there be in a Celestial Paradise for one who is of the Earth earthly? who savours continually of Turf and Dung? whose Faculties bend still downwards? and for whose Soul a Grave would be the most suitable Apartment, were there not a Repository below it? For a man that walks in the counsel of the ungodly, that stands in the way of Sinners, and sits in the seat of the scornful, what delight could

could it be to drop into an Exotick Society of Saints and Angels? To see themselves in *Abraham's* Bosom, would be as little pleasure as he took, that at a distance saw poor *Lazarus* there, and the rest of the Faithful, who by the holiness of their Lives have followed *Abraham* into Glory; would be so far from being agreeable Society to a filthy Wretch, that instead of enjoying complacency among them, he would find Upbraidings. And, *What communion hath light with darkness? what concord hath Christ with Belial?* saith the Apostle, *2 Cor. 6.* To see him, whose Blood they have trampled under their feet, what satisfaction could it be to any Confederates with the *Jews*? To behold him, whose Religion they have reproach'd, whole Laws they have violated, whose Doctrine they have disparag'd and corrupted, whose Tenders of Grace and Mercy they have rejected, whose Ordinances they have slighted, whose Promises they have laugh'd at, and whose Spirit they have resisted, griev'd, and quenched: This would be, to take up his Cross in an odd sense; to crucify themselves after all, and even in Heaven to put themselves to an open shame. And then, with what face could they look

look upon the Father of Lights, by whose Commission the Lord Jesus came into the World, to dye for us, and to redeem us from all Iniquity? or, with what complacency could they see the Perfections of God, to which they have such a strong aversion now, as entitles them to an affinity with the Devil, whose works they do? to behold the God of Purity, the God of Peace, the God of Love, the God of Mercy, Righteousness, and Compassion; and at the same time to see in themselves that Pride, Envy, Malice, and other such black Vices, which are peculiar to the Damned? To reconcile these things so as to make profligate Spirits happy in the fruition of God, is out of the reach of Omnipotence it self; because the nature of the thing cannot bear it. Lastly, As touching the Heavenly Exercises which are before God's Throne, the Divine Acts of Adoration and Praise, and those attended with the highest Fervours and Transports as can be express'd by the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, how could they be in the least agreeable to Souls immersed in mire and corruption?

I have been the more copious and distinct upon this Point, to *show* what dangerous

gerous and gross Mistakes they are under, who confidently trust, whether to dry Superstition on the one hand, or to hidden Decrees, and dead Notions, on the other; neglecting the thing of the vastest concernment; which is, to prepare and fit their Tempers for the enjoyment of another World. God's Purpose never was to destroy his own glorious Workmanship; or to annihilate the Faculties of the Soul, which are made essential to its Being; but to perfect them with Felicities which will be adapted to them, if we be but careful to improve them in this Life, by an universal compliance with those Laws which he hath prescribed to that end. He goes along with Nature, to polish and glorify it by degrees; and by our present state we may guess, what will be our future one; for what is not a delight and happiness to us before we die, can never be made our delight and happiness hereafter. Upon which account we should begin our Conversation in Heaven as soon as ever we can; and raise the Powers of our Souls to such a lofty pitch, that they may be ready for the sublimest Spiritualities; the only thing that can render those Spiritualities a pleasure and satisfaction to us.

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Suppose Irrational Creatures had the liberty to live with us Men, to cohabit with us, to converse with us, and to share with us in those Intercourses, Diversions, and Employments, which belong more peculiarly unto Mankind, would not such Liberty be to them a Confinement and Condemnation? would not natural Instinct direct them to go rather, the Ass to his Master's Crib, and the Sow to her Mire? The reason is, because the Faculties of Sense are of a low size, and of a course make, utterly incapable of rational and manly Entertainments. Why now, as Reason is higher than mere Sense, so is Spirituality higher than meer Reason, and infinitely above our Brutish Lusts; and if our Reason be debauch'd, and our Affections indispos'd, and addicted to Sensualities, the Society of Saints and Angels will be as much, every jot, too high for us, as ours is for Irrational Creatures; and as little pleasure we shall take in it, because it is so utterly unsuitable. There are some, who are said in Scripture to be *scoffers, abominable, filthy, men of vile affections, of corrupt minds, walking after their own lusts, children of the wicked one, alienated from the life of God, haters of*

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God,

God, enemies to Christ, and to every good work reprobate. By which, and the like Expressions, those People are meant, who are so far from being possess'd with a true sense of Religion, that their Hearts are set against it, and their Lives are as dissolute, as if they believed there were no such Being as God; no such Places as Heaven and Hell; no such Time as a Judgment-day; no such Things as Vice and Vertue, but in deluded mens Opinion. And can it be possible for Spirits thus wretchedly affected and deprav'd, to be fit for God? to desire any Being in the presence of God? or to be pleas'd with the things that are done there? when people dye in such a condition, they must go of necessity, and of course, to Spirits of the like hue and complexion. For whatever that State is which Souls pass into upon Death, they *enter* upon it here; even here Felicity, or Damnation begins. As the Prophet told the *Jews*, That when the King of *Babylon* should come, he would *deliver such as were for death, to death; and such as were for captivity, to captivity; and such as were for the sword, to the sword*, Jer. 43. 11. so it may be said when Death comes, it will deliver such as are for Hell, to Hell;
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and such as are for Heaven, to Heaven. For as on the one hand, Those have Hell already in part, and carry with them the beginning of sorrows (that Immortal Worm which was engendred on this side the Grave, and those vicious Dispositions and Habits which feed the Worm, and will be as eternal as the Worm that dieth not); so have these on the other hand some part of Heaven already; some Pledges, some Antepasts of it; some beginnings of Glory; namely, those Perfections, in some measure, which will be crowned in Heaven; and those Joys and Pleasures, in some degree, which will be their Portion in Heaven to endless Ages. Souls that now love to be serious, thoughtful, and contemplative, are well prepar'd for the Beatifick Vision. Souls that love to subdue and mortify all their sinful Affections, are ready to be in that place, where nothing that is unclean can enter. Souls that love to be meek, humble, governable, and righteous, are dispos'd to make up that obedient Host above. Souls that love to be benign, kind, and good, are fit for that Blessed State, where Charity shall never fail. And Souls that love to worship, praise, and magnify the great Father of Spirits,

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have an Heaven already within them, and are meet to be Partakers with those above, who *rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come,* Rev. 4. 8.

To draw this Point then to a conclusion: *If a Future State* of the sublimest Pleasures be the thing we aim at, we must prepare our selves for it, by suiting our Minds and Tempers to the condition of it; because this Preparation is the means to make us capable, first of obtaining, and then of *enjoying it*. The Scripture tells us, *that we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,* Col. 1. 22. And if we would know how, it tells us plainly, That it is by being spiritually-minded; *To be spiritually minded is life and peace,* Rom. 8. 6. Read that Chapter, and you will find it said over and over to this purpose: *They that are after the spirit, do mind the things of the spirit,* v. 5. And again, *To be carnally minded is death,* v. 6. And again, *The carnal mind is enmity against God,* v. 7. And again, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his,* v. 9. And again, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,*

live, v. 13. And again, *As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God*, v. 14. From which several places the result is this; That as we hope to be numbred among God's Children, and to be Heirs of his Glory, we must study to favour the things which be of God; set our Affections and Hearts upon the things in Heaven; learn to be guided by God's good Spirit, according to all his Laws; suit our minds to the mind of Jesus Christ; have that Spirit of Devotion, Meekness, Goodness, Patience, Humility, &c. which Christ had; and cleanse our Souls and Bodies from all the pollutions of the *world*. Now this is no other than a description of Holiness; or, of that excellent State of Separation from Sin, which I have hitherto spoken of; and it plainly sheweth that which I have now insisted on; *viz.* the indispensable necessity of Holiness in order to a Future State of Perfection and Pleasure.

And hence give me leave to recommend these two things to you at the close of this Discourse: 1. *One* is, To prepare your Souls for a Blessed State by the Practice of Holiness in all the parts and branches of it. 2. The other is, To

set about this great and most necessary Work betimes.

1. *First*, That you prepare your Souls for a Blessed State by the Practice of Holiness in all its parts and branches. Holiness in a large sense comprehends all Religion; not only those Duties which more immediately relate to the most Holy God, but moreover all those Virtues which relate to our Neighbours, and *our selves*. It is a State of Eminency and Excellence, which we are put into, by dedicating, and offering our selves up entirely to the Service of God in every particular. St. Paul calls it, *the yielding of our selves unto God*, Rom. 6. 13. because hereby we are all given up, and set apart, to obey God perfectly, as it becometh those who are now devoted to his Name. As to this there is no difference between Priest and People; *For we are all a chosen (or select) generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*, saith St. Peter, 1 Pet. 2. 9 meaning, that we are all, without distinction, appropriated and consecrated to God, to lead a peculiar and different form of life, and to shew forth the Praises (or Virtues) of him, *who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light*. Accordingly

cordingly we must live like Children of the light, pure, and without blemish, in all holy conversation and godliness. This is the *true* way of making provision for our Spirits, and of fitting them for a life in Heaven ; to apply our hearts and minds now to the love of every thing that is good ; and to have an universal rectitude of temper. To perform all acts of Righteousness now , will prepare us to be with the Spirits of just men made perfect. To delight in offices of Charity now, will qualify us for that place, where Love will be our work to everlasting. To purify our Affections now, will fit us for the Society of those, who have not defiled their Garments, but follow the Lamb in white. To have God always before our eyes now ; to possess our Souls now with a sense of his Excellencies ; to pour out our hearts unto him now ; to praise him now among the Faithful ; to adore and magnify him in his Sanctuary now ; and to be in love now with the Solemnities of Religion, and the Beauty of Holiness ; this is the direct and natural method of disposing our Souls beforehand for those Divine Exercises, wherein the Heavenly Life consisteth. For, though a Future State differs from This,
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yet the difference is, not so much in respect of the Quality, as in respect of the Perfection of it. It is of the same kind and nature with this; that is, a state of Knowledge, Virtue, and true Goodness; the happiness and glory of it lies in this, That all our Divine Endowments will there be without the least Error, Obliquity, or Defect: And to this State we grow up, after a genuine and kindly manner, and by degrees; as Corn grows to its due ripeness. There is first the Seed, next the Blade, then the Ear, and at last a full, fair, and hard Kernel. It is so in this case; there is first a supernatural Principle of Grace; that by our good husbandry improves and spreads into all manner of Virtues; that by our practice becomes habitual and fixt; and so all at last ends in Perfection and Glory. Our Saviour himself uses this Comparison, and calls it Wheat, *Matth. 13. 30. Gather the wheat into my barn*; meaning, Such gracious Souls as are fit and ready for that great Repository above. And it puts me in mind of an Expression in *Job, chap. 5. 26. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in its season.* He means an Age, not so full of years,
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as of goodness ; then the Soul is ripe, fit to be laid up, and in its season. This shews, how greatly it concerns us to improve now in all holy and virtuous Habits. It is the preparative to a Blessed State hereafter ; and to expect such a State without it, would be, as if you should expect an Harvest without manure, or Seed. For Grace is the principle of Glory ; and Glory is the perfection of Grace ; and the sure way to it is, to stock and furnish our Souls with such excellent and gracious Dispositions now, as will be capable of being raised to a most transcendent degree, when that which is perfect, a Life of full maturity, happiness and pleasure, shall come.

We were *born* into the World for this end, that we might fit our selves in it for a better ; nor would it be worth our while to stay here, were it not for the sake of a new Birth we must come to, for the Man to pass into a Saint, that when he has quite done with the World, he may be like unto an Angel. This Life is for our formation, and all the Dispensations of God now are adapted to this great purpose, that at last we may be like Vessels unto honour, sanctified,
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and made meet for the master's use, 2 Tim.

2. 21. This therefore we must go about with all possible application of mind, to new-mould and refine our Tempers ; to clear our hearts from every thing that is coarse and sordid ; to take off our Affections from Earth and *filth* ; and to set them upon things above ; and to polish all our Faculties so, that our whole Nature may bear a Divine Gloss ; because this is to anticipate Heaven, to possess a considerable part of it before hand ; and the nearer still we shall get to a plenary possession, the higher those degrees of Sanctity are, which we arrive to now.

2. Which Business being so indispensably necessary, it will follow, Secondly, That it deeply concerns us to set about it betimes ; with an early care, and a quick hand. For how uncertain and short is our Life here ? and what a miserable end shall we come to, should we close our Lives before the one thing necessary is finisht ? When once a man goes hence, he is no longer seen, no more heard of ; nor can we give any further account of him, but that we charitably hope he is in a good state. But this is more than we know certainly of any man ; and more than we can be sure of as to our selves ;

selves ; unless our assurance be grounded on a testimony of Conscience, *that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.* Now how can any man have that true Testimony, without a Life of Holiness? If his Life speaks one thing, and his Conscience tells him quite another, the Testimony of his Heart must needs be false ; and consequently his Hope, that resteth upon a false Bottom, must deceive him too, how strong and vigorous soever it may be as to its Act. Therefore that his Heart and Hope may be both trusted, his only way is, with all speed possible to transform his Heart into an holy and divine Temper ; without losing a minute, for fear that single minute should be his last. But why do I speak of a minute, when days and months are a poor allowance for a Task of this consequence and labour ? For suppose he had nothing to contend with, but meer Nature ; I mean those Evil Inclinations he derived from the Loins of his Parents, and brought with him into the World ; this alone would afford him work all the days of his Life. For till Nature be quite dissolved, it will be stirring ; it will produce such desires and motions as will
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call for his watchfulness and industry, till he drops into the Grave. But how very few are there which are thus innocent? that have no Sin to answer for, but their hereditary Corruptions? As we grow up, our Evil Inclinations are confirm'd; Habits are contracted; and thereby the Mind is still the more corrupt, and the Will becomes the stiffer and harder to be conquer'd. And this is the case of the generality of people, that they blame Nature, when the Crime is of their own choice; for they teach their Hearts to be froward and perverse by using themselves to sinful Courses, and by delighting in them; and when a man's state is so bad, how soon soever he goes about to mend it, he must find difficulties enough, whatever the Vices be in themselves. Witness that single wicked Custom of common Swearing: though it be such a fruitless, insipid, and mean Sin, yet how hard a matter is it to break those of it, who have accustomed their Tongues to a lewd turn of them? It must needs be much harder in other Instances, where either Profit makes it a rich Vice, or Pleasure a sweet one; and yet it is certain, that a sinful Habit, whatever the nature of it be, is incon-

inconsistent with a state of true Holiness. Upon this account, no time should be lost, because the work before a man is so long and laborious; especially if it be considered, that for every Vice that is rooted out, a contrary Virtue must be planted in; and some Virtues are of so high a strain, that without great Patience, Pains, and Resolution, we cannot acquire and reach them; as that Virtue, in particular, of loving our Enemies and Persecutors; it is quite against the grain of Nature; nor did ever any Religion require it, as our Holy Saviour's doth. His Laws indeed are plain and express, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you*, Matth. 5. 44. And again, Rom. 12. 20, 21. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* These Laws were not provided in favour of Injustice, or to encourage Oppression and Ill Nature, but to fit suffering people for a future state, by making them like unto God in Patience and Goodness; the Children of that Merciful Being
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who sends his rain upon the just and the unjust. Now such an habit of Love and Kindness is not presently gotten ; nor do other Virtues start up, like the Prophet's Gourd, in a night, and on a sudden ; especially so as to be fix'd, and out of danger of a Worm. It is Time, and Exercise, and the constant Multiplication of Acts, that must make them habitual. Still we must be employed in fighting with our untoward Dispositions, in governing and taming our Passions, and in keeping the Old Man under ; for till Nature be subdued, we cannot tell whether we shall go off Conquerors ; and a compleat, perfect Victory there cannot be, till we have quite ended this our Militant state.

Which shews the Necessity of practising Holiness betimes ; the thing to be undertaken being so great, so arduous, and yet so indispensable, that without Holiness we shall neither be permitted to see the Lord, nor be capable of enjoying him.

Were our Lives longer than they are naturally, it would be time little enough to learn how to dye well. But many people shorten their Lives themselves by their Exorbitances and Follies : And
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what others are afraid of doing, several surprizing Accidents do for them, cut them off before they have lived out half their days, as they thought. The truth is, no man is safe for a day; and for fear of the worst, the surest way is, *To cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, while it is yet called, To day. Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, saith the Son of Syrach, Ecclus. 5. 7. and put it not off from day to day; for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance. To prevent which, May the God of Peace sanctify us all wholly, that our whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, may be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, and Praise, world without end. Amen.*

N CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

HAVING now finish'd what I thought most necessary for me to do upon the former Part of this Discourse, concerning the Nature, Possibility, Degrees, and Necessity of Holiness; it will be very requisite for me to proceed to the more Practical Part, to shew, What Means are proper to be used, that we may acquire and perfect Holiness. For it is to little purpose to be told, What our Duty is, or that we may and must perform it; unless we be instructed also, How we may go about it, and succeed. In all things to be done, men must be shewed the way; especially where the thing proposed is of such vast concernment, that they cannot regularly expect to have their Sins forgiven, or their Souls saved without the doing of it. Such is the Practice of Holiness: And that you may be Holy indeed, many useful Methods might be prescribed, and all perhaps few enough, considering the Importance of the Matter, and the Condition of the Age. But I think the best and shortest Directions may be reduced under these Seven following Heads:

1. To

1. To possess your Mind habitually with the true Fear of God.
2. To live in the constant use of God's sanctifying Ordinances.
3. In your Purposes and Actions to take your Pattern by God's Nature.
4. To act always upon a Principle of Conscience.
5. To guard your self carefully against all Occasions of Sin.
6. To proceed in an Holy Course with Patience and Christian Fortitude.
7. To have a constant Eye to the Recompence of Reward.

1. *First then, that you may be holy in all manner of conversation,* possess your mind habitually with the true fear of God; for fear being a passion of the Soul, that powerfully moves us to avoid whatever is conceiv'd to be grievous, hurtful, or unsafe, it must needs have an extraordinary influence, when the evils we are afraid of, are apprehended to be in a Just and Omnipotent hand; that is, when we stand in awe of that Supreme, Infinite Being, who will certainly render to every man according to his works, and is able to cast both soul and body into hell.

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This naturally serves to make us have a care how we live; it cannot but carry a mighty force over our actions and our hearts too, because it is such a fearful thing for corrupt men to fall into his hands, who is the punisher of all iniquity, and the searcher of our very hearts and reins; and therefore when the Apostle bids us *to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*; he subjoins this as one sure way to it, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

Now, when by way of distinction I mention the true fear of God; meaning, a genuine awe of his Justice and Power; it intimates that there is a sort of Dread which is not such, and consequently not so productive of Holiness, as a true genuine fear is; and therefore that you may know what kind of fear you must possess your mind with, before we go any further upon this subject, it is to be noted, that there is a threefold fear of God. *First*, such a dread or horror, as doth fill the mind with pain, anxiety and torment. Now every sincere, honest-hearted Christian, must beware of entertaining this fear, and that for two Reasons.

1. For

1. For first, Where there is not a corrupt Mind, and an evil Conscience, this Fear must proceed from false and evil Notions of the Deity. People so possess must either look upon God as a Malevolent, Cruel, and Tyrannical Being, that delights in the Miseries of his Creatures, and acteth according to his own Arbitrary Will and Power: Or else, though they acknowledge him to be righteous in all his ways, they must apprehend him to be an Austere, Strict, and Rigid Being, that is angry, and ready to punish men for every the least Transgression. These are very ill-natur'd Notions, representing the Ever-blessed God as the most ill-natur'd Thing: And such as labour under these frightful Ideas, are directly stimulated by them to do every thing with trembling Minds and fearful Hearts; and upon every sense of their miscarriages to cover themselves with horror, with many dark and dismal apprehensions. Therefore every good man should fortify himself against impressions of this kind, because it is a false fear, that is grounded upon a false bottom; and even in this sense we may say with the Apostle, *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear*

bath torment, 1 John 4. 18. 2. Secondly, As the Cause of this Fear is evil, so are its Effects; for instead of encouraging men to holiness of heart and life, it naturally serves to sink the Mind into Despondency, and to produce in it a secret abhorrence of one's Maker. Whatever is terrible and daunting, we must needs detest, loathe, and be utterly averse to. Dread and Hatred are so linked together, that even the Heathen *Plutarch* observes of those *δεισιμαγνεις*, or over-fearful people, who look upon God as a formidable and hurtful Being, that they Hate as well as Fear him. In short, this superstitious, disquieting, and slavish Passion of the Soul, is so far from exciting men to be holy as God is holy, that it rather makes them wish there were no God at all: And I doubt not but those who after many struglings have at last prevailed with themselves to deny the Existence of the Deity, did first copy out an Idea of him from their own wicked Temper, rendring God like themselves, harsh, spiteful, and mischievous, and then proceeding next to hate, and at length to disown him. For certainly did men conceive of God as he is, infinitely kind, good, and benign, as well as just
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and powerful, he could not but appear the most desirable Being in the whole world ; so that if we could suppose him not to Be, every good man could not but heartily wish he were.

2. Upon the whole, we may call the Passion I have now spoken of, a Vicious Fear. That, *secondly*, which is *Religious* and *Right*, is made up of Reverence and Love ; and the proper Object of it is not any single Attribute of God, whether it be his Justice or his Power, but a Complex of his Divine Perfections ; that is, his Justice, Power, and Benignity, taken all together : Because he is so Righteous in himself, that he cannot but hate all Iniquity ; and so Almighty too, that he is able to punish it ; there is reason enough for all workers of iniquity to be afraid : And because he is so Good too in his Nature, that he is ready to assist, strengthen, protect, succour, pardon, and reward all those that diligently seek him, there is all the reason in the world for such as are sincere and true of heart to love him. And thus there are two Affections mingled together, Love with Reverence ; and this is that Genuine Fear we should possess our Minds with. Divines are wont to

call it a Filial Fear; because it resembles that which discerning, dutiful Children have for their Parents, whom they venerate for their Authority; and for their Tenderness return them reciprocal Affection. 'Tis not so much the fear of Punishment that governs them, as the fear of an Indulgent Father's displeasure; the fear of losing ground in his Affections; which is far more to them than the severest Correction. Nay, this is that which makes Correction so grievous, a suspicion that there is some abatement of Love on the Father's part; for the Pain goes off the Mind, when once they are secure and satisfied as to that. Now by this affectionate Reverence we give the Fathers of our Flesh, we may in some measure discover the nature of that Fear which is due to the Father of Spirits: 'Tis a pious, good-natur'd Awe, a Filial Disposition of Mind; an Affection that is founded on a deep sense of the great Love of God; and upon an holy Ambition of abiding in that Love. Such a Fear as the *Psalmist* describes, a Fear attended with Delight; *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, he hath great delight in his commandments*, *Psalm*. 112. 1. 'Tis true, the apprehension

prehension of God's Justice cometh in too: For as there is a natural difference between good and evil, so there must be of course a difference in the retribution of Rewards and Punishments; and the Righteous Judge of all the earth will render to every man according to his works; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, (he will render) indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8. But the Prophet Hosea speaks of mens fearing the Lord, and his goodness, Hos. 3. 5. And so the devout Psalmist seems to make the Goodness of God to be the chief Reason and Motive of our Fear towards him; Psal. 130. 4. *There is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.* And then indeed is our fear of God genuine, and not conditioned, when we are afraid, not so much of being damned to eternal Torment, as of disintitling our selves to God's Goodness; of forfeiting his great Love, and of falling from his Grace and Favour. There is a Fear of God even in the Devils themselves; for they believe
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and tremble, James 2. 19. But 'tis only the Consideration of the Divine Justice and Omnipotence that makes them quake; and 'tis a fear that is accompanied with Hatred, Spite, Malevolence, Envy, and Cursings at the Divine Majesty, because they foresee Eternal Vengeance to be coming from him. But this is a quite different thing from that obsequious, dutiful, and affectionate regard of God, which we should possess our Minds with; an Awe and Reverence that springs from a kindly sense, not only of the Righteousness and Power of God, but of his Infinite Goodness and Love too.

Having thus explained the Quality of this Fear, I proceed now to shew how instrumental it is in order to the acquiring and perfecting of Holiness. And for the right understanding hereof, you must remember what I told you before, That the Fear of God doth not proceed from a sense of one or two of his Attributes apart from the rest, as that Terror doth which is in wicked men and Devils; but is raised and cherished by the apprehension of several Attributes together, and in conjunction. I have already mentioned his Goodness as a principal Attribute;

bute; and the next is his Omniscience; of which the holy *Psalmist* speaks in such a particular feeling manner, *Psal.* 139. *O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and up-rising. Thou understandest my thoughts long before (they are conceived). Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways. For lo! there is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether,* vers. 1, 2, 3. Which shews that God is not only privy to what we say or do, but knoweth the very secrets of the heart, and infallibly foresees all our future actions, and understands them even in their Rudiments and Originals. Indeed the very Notion of a Deity includes perfect knowledge of every thing that is capable of being known: For God is a Being which is absolutely Perfect; and his Existence cannot be supposed, without supposing him to know all things perfectly, without any the least mixture of Error or Ignorance; for otherwise he could not be absolutely perfect, which is impossible to be supposed. And if we our selves are conscious of our own Actions and Thoughts, much more must God, who is not bounded as we
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poor Creatures are, within a finite sphere of activity. *He that made the eye, shall not he see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he punish?* Psal. 94. 9, 10. Nay, he that formed the Sun, and makes it daily to cast its Beams over the whole Earth, and with its Heat and Light to touch all the penetrable Particles of Matter, so that it views, as it were, all things at once, and nothing is hid from it, shall not he, that Infinite and All-comprehending Being, discover the works of our hands, the exertings, operations, and motions of our spirits? Why now, this Consideration, did we suffer it to descend out of the Brain into the Heart, and to sink deep into it, could not but make such impressions there, as would be enough to check our Lusts, and to keep those hearts from being polluted, which are so exposed and open to an All-seeing Eye.

Were it possible for any man to conceal and hide his Actions, and to keep the Supream Governour of the World in ignorance, he might be emboldned to defile himself and others by a prospect of Impunity: For if God doth not know, how can he take cognisance of people's Demerits? How can he punish? How
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can the Judge of all the Earth do right? And this is the Principle which presumptuous Wretches go upon; that, as those Jews thought, *Ezek. 9. 9. The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.* Such people learn, and use themselves to Vice, by being first Infidels; and throw away Faith, that Conscience and Morality may follow. They say in their hearts, *God hath forgotten; he hideth his face; he will never see it, Psal. 10. 11.* And, *How doth God know? is there knowledge in the most high? Psal. 73. 14.* No; *The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it, Psal. 94. 7.* But the Affairs of the World do not hang in such a loose condition. *For the Lord is a God at hand, and not a God afar off: None can hide himself in secret places, that he shall not see him; because he filleth heaven and earth, Jer. 23. 23, 24.* He is an Infinite Mind, comprehending and pervading all things; and as his Essence is unbounded, so must his Knowledge be too by necessary consequence; *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do; or, to whom we must give an account, Heb. 4. 13.* The sense whereof

whereof cannot but have a mighty influence upon our Lives, if we do but thoroughly possess and animate our minds with it. For all manner of Sin carries with it a great tincture of shame ; so that often modesty alone is a curb, where Conscience hath but little power ; and though some can easily throw off the thoughts of a Judge , yet even such Wretches are afraid of having a Witness of their Evil Actions. Many times the presence of a meer Man , especially if it be a grave, venerable, and awful Person, is enough to restrain others from acting that which is either sinful, or but indifferent : And certainly, it could not but be a most effectual help to us for the regular government of all our Actions, did we carry in our minds daily an awful apprehension of God's Omniscience ; a firm and lively belief of these great Truths, That God besets us behind and before ; *That we cannot go from his spirit, nor flee from his presence ; that whether we ascend up into heaven, he is there ; whether we make our beds in hell, he is there ; whether we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there his hand leadeth us ; that darkness itself doth not hide us from him ; but that*
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the night to him is as clear as the day, Pſal.

139. and that another day he will openly reward what he now ſeeth in ſecret, Matth.

6. 4. For who would dare to offend that moſt Righteous Being, who critically obſerves all that we meditate, or do, and will judge us accordingly?

And if the ſenſe of God's inſpection over us all be enough to ſtrike even ſervile Spirits with ſuch a dread as is coercive and forcing, it muſt needs be a ſure means of acquiring and perfecting Holineſs, when this fear of God becomes Filial; mingled with our unfeigned love to God, and ſpringing from the apprehenſion of his wonderful Love to us. Such a man cannot but know, that God's Eye is over him for his own good; and therefore he muſt needs beware the more of doing any thing that is diſpleaſing in God's ſight; becauſe he cannot diſpleaſe him, without prejudicing and hurting his own Intereſt. For God hath called us unto Holineſs, not for any advantage that can poſſibly redound to him, who is infinitely perfect and happy in himſelf; but it is for our own ſake purely; that by the ſanctity of our Minds and Tempers we may be capable of Perfection and Happineſs too: And that we
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may work out our Salvation with the greater caution, he tells us, *That his eye is continually over the righteous*; like an indulgent Father, that stands by his Child, and for security-sake seeth him do that which he knows in the end will be for his Profit, and Felicity. The consideration of this serves not only to highten our love to God, that thus sensibly loves us, but moreover to invigorate our Spirits with a true genuine fear; such as is not attended with torment, but caution; whereby we run the way of God's Commandments with delight; and yet with an holy jealousy over our selves, lest we should come short of his Goodness after all; and as in the presence still of that Omniscient Being, who is so pure in himself, that he cannot favourably behold any manner of Iniquity. This was the reason and ground of that eminent Zeal which was in *St. Paul*; a Religious Fear, lest when he had preached to others, he himself should become a Castaway. 'Twas a Jealousy accompanied with a deep sense of God's singular Goodness to him; first, in pardoning so freely all the Crimes of his Life, and then in making him such a Chosen Vessel, such a particular Instrument of God's Glory. This
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Consideration lay and dwelt in his mind continually; how he had been apprehended (to use his own Expression) meaning, how Christ had overtaken and seiz'd him in his way to *Damascus*; how he had made him his own; how he had laid hold on him as his peculiar Prize: And this inspired him with such life, constancy, and courage throughout all his Labours and Sufferings: *Not* (saith he) *as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*, Phil.

3. 12.

That you may then proceed with vigour in perfecting Holiness, as *St. Paul* did, be sure to carry that in your mind which he carried in his; namely, a Divine Love mixt with a Religious Fear of God. And when I said, you must possess your mind with it habitually, the meaning is, That you must use your self so familiarly to a sense of God, that the fear of him may be fixt in you, as a kind of natural Disposition. For it is not necessary for a man to have in every particular Action of his Life actual and explicite thoughts of God. The condition of our Nature will not allow that;

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especially considering the variety of Secular Affairs which call for our daily attendance, and the unavoidable incursion of Foreign Idea's, which drop daily into our minds, and give them some disturbance. But yet by thinking frequently of God, and of his perfect knowledge of all things, by reason of the plenitude and infinity of his Essence, we shall gain such an habitual fear of him, as will have a constant power over us, and like a Bias in our Nature, will perpetually incline us to the observation of his Laws, wherever we go, whatever we do, and howsoever our Circumstances may prove. For as Habits do enable our Faculties to act with the quicker dispatch, and the greater ease; so do they help to make us steady and regular in acting, though our minds be not explicitly and actually intent in every particular case, but may be sometimes a little loose and wandering; we see that in all Arts the inward Habit doth powerfully govern and regulate the outward Action, even when the mind is tempted to rove abroad about another matter. As in Musick, for instance; The Artist considers not deliberately about every single stroke, or about every String or Key; but

but his thoughts are many times a little taken off from those Notes, wherewith at the same moment he entertains you ; he observes you ; he sees, hears, and talks with you upon by-subjects, and yet the Harmony goes on : 'Tis the habit that guides and directs the Hand, though the Head be otherwise employed. Why, thus it would be with us all, had we but the divine art of fearing God truly. That habitual fear would govern and guide us, and make an harmony in our Actions; not only in our more serious Affairs, but even in the midst of those Pleasures and Diversions which are apt a little to unfix our Spirits, and to make our Thoughts fugitive and airy. That Habit would be a Principle, a powerful and regulating Principle, to check our Corrupt Affections ; to keep us unspotted from the world ; to bend our Minds continually the right way ; and to make us walk before God in Holiness and Righteousness all our days : So that we shall still have a general, implicate awe of the Divine Majesty, even while we are about the Works of our several Callings ; nay, while we are enjoying the Innocent Comforts and Recreations of Humane Life. Hence it is, that the Fear of God

is said in Scripture to be the beginning of Wisdom ; and very often it signifies the whole System of Religion ; because it is the main principle that sets all our Faculties at work ; and when it is habitual, it makes us move with uniformity, and steadiness ; like Ballast in a Ship, that poiseeth it, and keeps it from being tossed to and fro with every Wind ; and so preserves it from many dangers of a Wreck, which otherwise it would be expos'd to. Therefore, that you may perfect Holiness indeed, be sure to have God in your thoughts as often as you can : Let the sense of his Majesty, Bignity, and Omniscience dwell in you ; and consider daily, that his Eye is continually over you, and that for your own good ; that tho he himself be invisible to Flesh and Blood, because he is a Spirit, yet day and night he beholds you ; that in your closest retirements he is present with you, a Spectator and Witness of what you do ; that he takes notice of all your Actions, and of the Operations and Contrivances of your very Hearts ; that whatever you do now in private, will one day be made known, and proclaimed as it were from the House-top ; and that he will most certainly render to
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you according to your works, in that great and terrible day, when he will judge even the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

C H A P. VIII.

2. *Secondly*, Another effectual way of acquiring and perfecting Holiness is, to live as in the habitual fear of God, so in the constant use of all his sanctifying Ordinances. By which are understood those solemn Offices of Religion which God hath ordained as the standing means of Grace and Salvation; and they are these three chiefly. 1. *First*, The religious use of God's Word, under which is comprehended the diligent reading of the Holy Scripture, the constant and attentive hearing it opened and inculcated, and the meditating seriously upon what we have read and heard. 2. *Secondly*, The devout worshipping of God by daily Prayer and Praises. And *Thirdly*, The frequent partaking of the Symbols of Christ's Body and Blood. These Sacred Ordinances are the Instruments of Holiness in a twofold respect. 1. *First*, Because they are the ordinary

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Conveyances and Vehicles of a supernatural, sanctifying Principle: *For it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13.* And it is upon the due use of these Institutions, that God is pleased to operate in the heart; *So that, as faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. 10. 17.* in like manner are other spiritual graces sown, invigorated and increas'd upon our honest and humble application of these holy means. Nor are we to be discouraged from the use of them, because in the eyes of prophane and conceited men they seem slight, trifling, and contemptible; *For they are indeed the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* This the Apostle shews, *1 Cor. 1.* where he speaks of the great power of Preaching in particular. Though it was accounted foolishness by those who pretended to profound knowledge, and extraordinary wisdom, yet *it pleased God by this (reputed) foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, ver. 21.* And again, *ver. 25. The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* And again, *ver. 27, 28. God hath chosen the foolish things of the*

the world, to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world , and things which are despised, hath God chosen ; yea, and things which are not , to bring to nought the things that are. The result of which is this ; That though some great Pretenders reckon the Ordinances which are used in the Christian Church to be mean, foolish, despicable, and ridiculous methods, yet the wonderful effect they have upon the hearts of all humble Believers shews, that they are powerful Institutions ; and that the Counsel of God in disposing, ordering, and appointing them, is very wise and glorious ; that after all the noble successes of them, in helping to reform our Lives, and to purify our Souls, no flesh may glory in God's presence, because *the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man, 2 Cor. 4. 7.*

2. Indeed the wisdom of God in appointing these Ordinances appears in this, because they are suitable to our powers and faculties ; and consequently, are apt Instruments in the hand of God to produce and promote true Holiness in us, which is a second Reason

that necessitates the use of them. To instance, first, in the Word of God. It proposeth such Doctrines to our Belief, as contain all necessary truths, and are proper for Creatures which are endued with understanding and reason, that our Consciences may be fully informed, and not act in the dark, or upon uncertainties. It lays before us the Precepts of Virtue and Piety, to regulate our wills, and to conduct our desires, that we may chuse and follow that which is good and pleasing in the sight of God. It tells us of a future state, and of the rewards and punishments that shall be distributed then, according as our Lives are now; to move and animate those working affections of the Soul, Hope and Fear. It shews us the great folly, and the dreadful consequents of Sin, and gives all the encouragements to an Holy Life, which are fit for rational Beings, that can discern the difference between good and evil. In short, the Holy Scripture, whether read or expounded, is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that every man may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.* And the more we apply our minds

minds to the study and understanding of it, and resign up our selves to be govern'd by it, the more able still we shall be, and the better we shall know how to live and die in an Holy state.

The worshipping of God by Prayer and Praises, is not only a direct Instrument of Holiness, but the most solemn exercise of it; an Holy Office and Employment; I mean, when the Mind bears its part, and goes along attentively with the Tongue. Here the Mind is taken off from low, base, earthly Objects, and is set upon Idea's that are proper for an Immortal Spirit, that is a Ray of the Deity, and that must one day *return to God who gave it, when the dust shall return to the earth as it was*, Eccles. 12. 7. Here we think of Death and Judgment, of a Future State, that will be endless and unchangeable, and of such other affecting things as directly serve to make us very serious, and to compose the whole Soul into such a frame as is Divine and Heavenly. Here those Joys which are above, drop down into our thoughts, so that we relish them before-hand, and by the ravishing sweetness we find in them, are excited to crave and long after the fulness of pleasure which is at God's
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Right Hand for evermore. Here our hearts are fixed upon God ; we view him as if we were now out of the Body ; we adore his glorious Majesty , and those his infinite Perfections, which raise in the heart Admiration, Faith, Dependance, Humility, Submission, Love, and such other spiritual Graces, as are naturally apt to purify the Soul from all manner of corruption. In short, If there be an Heaven upon earth, the spirits of devout men have it ; nor can their hearts be suppos'd to be at any time in such a state of separation from Sin, as when they are addressing themselves devoutly to that perfect and holy Being, who is the Searcher of the heart and reins.

And then, as touching the Blessed Sacrament, it is such a strict and solemn Engagement to Holiness in all manner of Conversation, that I fear this is the true reason why many people neglect the use of it, because they cannot communicate rightly, and sin on still. Here we see God's utter hatred of all Impiety , in that he would not pardon the world without some satisfaction first made to his Justice. Here we perceive the Criminal Nature of Sin, in that nothing could expiate the excessive Guilt of it, but

but the most Precious Blood of the Son of God. Here is a lively representation of his great Love to Mankind, enough to affect and in-tender even hearts of stone. Here Jesus Christ is, as it were, crucified before our eyes; to show us what Wounds, Agonies, and Torments, the Sins of the World did once cost him. And here too we enter afresh into Covenant with God, and with our hands laid upon the Symbols of his Son's Body and Blood, we do solemnly promise, undertake, and vow, that from henceforth we will walk before him in Newness of Life.

Thus you see, in short, what powerful Means of Sanctity the Ordinances of God would prove, did men but use them after a Religious manner. And therefore that you may acquire and perfect Holiness in the fear of God, be sure to lay hold on all fair Opportunities of appearing before him, and of worshipping him duly in the Beauty of Holiness. The oftner you do this, the greater improvements you will make; and the more you will be out of the Devil's way, who never tempts and ensnares people so successfully, as when they absent themselves, or straggle aside from the services

services of the Sanctuary ; which would be a check upon them, and keep them within the bounds of Piety and Virtue, by the continual Impressions which the Mind receives in the use of God's Ordinances. And this is a great occasion of those Immoralities which are among us ; because people turn their backs upon those holy Institutions which would make them wise and serious ; and so Irreligion and Vice go together ; they are Companions of course, and by natural consequence ; tho I cannot say but in this case there is also a judicial act, whereby God doth deliver them up to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind, who live as if they were without God in the world.

We should therefore *pray always*, Eph. 6. 18. and *without ceasing*, 1 Thes. 5. 17. like those Primitive Paterns of Holiness, that were *continually in the temple, praising and blessing God*, Luke 24. 53. meaning, that we must not let slip any fair Opportunities and Hours of Devotion, especially such times as are fix'd and stat'd. And of this a more particular care should be taken on the Lord's-day, which is sanctified or set apart for holy ends and purposes ; partly at our private Houses, and

and chiefly in the Church. To answer which ends, all people should beforehand prepare their hearts for the works of the day, by unfeigned Repentance from evil works. They should go to the House of God with a deep and reverent sense of his Majesty and Holiness. They should transact their Services to him with such Humility, Seriousness, Zeal, and Collection of Thoughts, as becometh those who are now adoring that Infinite Being on whose Goodness they depend for all that they have or hope for. They should hear his Word, as that whereby they must be judged in that great and terrible Day; attend to it with Minds that are teachable, and desirous of information; lay it up carefully in honest and good hearts; digest it well there; resolve to make it the great Rule of their actions, and adorn it with such Practice as is suitable. And when the Publick Solemnities are over, they should meditate upon what they have heard and done; instruct and direct their Families; be Guides to the ignorant, by making themselves their Books, and by giving them Ocular Evidence of the Power of Religion, by the Authority of their own good Examples. These should

should be mens *Sundays* Employments ; and if they would but exercise themselves in them with Industry and Zeal, they could not chuse but be much the Holier for them all the Week following ; especially if they were so provident as to repair to the Church at other stated times, there by repeated Acts of Devotion to preserve those Fervors which were kindled a little before among the Faithful in the Great Congregation. These things are so obvious, natural, and easy, that if people be not Holy indeed, 'tis a sad sign they have no mind to it ; which, I fear, is the true account of their scandalous Negligence , who come so seldom to the Solemnities of God's Worship, as if they were afraid of being wiser and better than they are.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

3. **T**HE third way towards the acquiring and perfecting of Holiness is, in your purposes and actions to take your pattern by God's Nature; and for our clearer proceeding upon this Point, I am here to shew these two things.

1. *First*, What is meant by God's Nature, and how we are to take pattern by it; and,

2. *Secondly*, How perfective of Holiness the Imitation of the Divine Nature will be to us.

1. *First* then, By God's Nature is here understood, not his Infinite Essence, simply and abstractedly consider'd, (for that is singular, incommunicable, unimitable, and by consequence unexemplary) but those glorious Perfections which we conceive under the Notion of Properties or Attributes, which presuppose his Essence. Indeed God is one most perfect, uncompounded Being; but such is the natural weakness and narrowness of humane Understanding, that we are not able to form one entire Idea of God all at once, and therefore
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are fain to represent him to our minds under divers, inadequate Notions, as it were by parts ; though all this while it be but one and the self-same thing which is thus variously represented. So we are forced to distinguish, after the manner of men, between his Existence, singly and nakedly conceiv'd, and his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, and the like ; though all these Attributes mean but one perfectly Powerful, Wise, Good, and Righteous Being. For as all Properties suppose the Nature to which they belong, though they be essential to it, and inseparable from it ; so do the Perfections of God suppose his Existence, however we are constrained, by reason of the incapacity of our Faculties, to consider them distinctly ; as we distinguish between the Rays and Body of the Sun, though it be but one glorious Creature, endued with a plenitude of light and heat, that is in reality inseparable from it. Now of God's Attributes there are some, which for distinction sake, Divines call his Moral Perfections, because they are the rule and measure of his Actions ; as his Truth, Faithfulness, Wisdom, Righteousness, Mercy, and Benignity. According to all these doth he act, and
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exert his Power, and govern his Will; and this is that Nature of God which we should take for our Pattern in our purposes and actions; that is, in other words, we should be careful in all the great concernments of our life, to chuse and do like that wise, just, and gracious Being, *who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, Psal. 145. 17.

'Tis true, the Commandments of God are the immediate Rule for us to direct and govern our Actions by; because they contain his Revealed Will, from which we are not to depart upon any account; no, though we should believe, that by breaking one of his Commandments we act in subserviency to that Will of God, which is suppos'd to be secret. But yet 'tis certain, that God's Commandments are for the most part so many Transcripts of himself; Copies of his own most Perfect Nature; Patterns given us to this end, that by ordering our Hearts and Lives according to them, we may be Partakers of the Divine Nature; and the more we follow them, the more perfect we are, and the more like unto God.

Nay, God's Nature is the Rule and Measure of his own Actions. For all

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his Works are such as become a Being that is infinitely Wise and Good. He doth nothing merely to shew his Power, or because he will do it; *but worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*, Ephes. 1. 11. that is, for wise and great Reasons, which incline him to act so, as he judgeth things to be necessary or best to be done; proper and fitting for a Being to do, that is in all respects transcendently Perfect, Excellent, and Gracious. Which makes it the more necessary for us, in our Purposes and Actions to take our pattern by God's Nature, because it is his own Rule. And this is that which makes our Actions to be of a laudable nature; namely, their correspondence and agreeableness to God's Perfections. 'Tis not so much, because he wills them, that they are good; but because they are suitable to his Nature; and for that reason he wills them, because they are so; that is, because they are reasonable and just; fair, proper, and good things in themselves.

2. Having said thus much touching God's Nature, and our imitation of it; I proceed next to shew, how perfective of Holiness it will be for us to take our pattern by it. And this appears already from

from what I said about the beginning of this Discourse; That the imitable Holiness of God himself consisteth in the intire rectitude of his Will, according to the Laws of Eternal Reason: and therefore it must needs be very perfective of Holiness in us, to be conformable to his Mind and Inclinations. As the Holiness of his Essence lieth in the Transcendent, Singular, and most August Perfection and Eminence of his Being; so the Holiness of his Will lieth in the exact regularity of all his Purposes and Actions, agreeable to what his Wisdom, Justice, and Benignity do direct; so that he both loveth Righteousness in his heart, and is perfectly righteous in all his ways; neither decreeing, nor doing, nor commanding, nor approving of any thing, which in the common sense of Mankind is foul, or ill; and when our Minds are such, then are we holy too.

But for the further illustration of this matter, we are to consider, That all that Corruption or Baseness which is in the world, proceedeth from mens deviating and departing from the ways of God, whether we look upon him as a Wise, or as a Just, or as a Gracious Being.

I. *First*, As he is a Wise Being ; he acteth evermore exactly according to the Dictates of his own Infinite and Infalible Reason ; as the natures of things require ; and for Ends that are laudable and glorious. Still he proceeds by the Rule of Eternal and Unerring Reason ; and to represent him as a Being that acteth rashly, and at random, without counsel or forecast, and without respect to the goodness and fittingness of things, is to ascribe to him a defect of Knowledge ; and consequently, to frame an Idea of him which is utterly repugnant to the notion of a Deity ; that is, a most Perfect Being. Now it would be an excellent means of making us holy, did we take God for our Example, and act wisely in our Stations, and according to our Capacities ; did we, when we are about an Action of moment, consult right Reason before we do it ; enquire into the nature of the thing ; carry a steady eye upon the great End for which we were made (I mean, Eternal Happiness) and consider seriously, whether the Action we are inclined to do, be proper and instrumental to bring that End to pass. This wise Forecast and Counsel would, I say, be an admirable way to acquire
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and perfect Holiness ; because all manner of Sin is, not only the most reproachful, but the most foolish and unaccountable thing in the world ; so unreasonable in it self ; so unbecoming a Rational Nature ; so base and foul in the Commission ; and so infinitely hurtful in its Issues and Events ; yet none can be a wicked wretch, but he must first cast off Man, and degenerate himself into the Society of Brutes, that are led by Instinct and Fancy to the gratifications of Sense, not deliberating at all about what they do, nor considering in the least, either the quality, or the circumstances, or the consequents of their Actions. And how inconsistent is all this with the imitation of God ? nay, how quite contrary and opposite to the way of that Holy One, who still acteth after the Prescriptions of the Highest reason, and in all his Operations constantly doth the wisest Things, for the wisest Purposes, and after the wisest Manner ?

2. Look upon him, *secondly*, as a Just Being ; so he acteth evermore according to the Eternal Laws of Righteousness and Equity. There are some things which are everlastingly and immutably Just : As, to allow every one

his Rights, whether they be natural, or acquired; to answer Obligations, whether they be laid upon one by another, or by himself; to deal with every one according to what he deserves, whether it be Reward or Punishment. And to be sincere in all Dealings and Intercourses with others, whether by Speech or Action, without any sinister design of Deceit, or Falshood. These are fixt Rules of Righteousness, which no Time, no Place, nor any Circumstances can alter. Accordingly, *all the ways of God are equal*, Ezek. 18. 29. *There is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons*, 2 Chron. 19. 7. He is so far from oppressing, from wronging, from cruelly, or injuriously treating, *that he doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. 3. 33. *He is a faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations*, Deut. 7. 9. *All his promises are Yea, and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. For, it is impossible for him to lye, Heb. 6. 18. *Just and true are his ways*, Rev. 15. 3. *His truth endureth to all generations*, Psal. 100. 5. *And in righteousness will he judge the world; rendering to every man according to*

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to his deeds, Rom. 2. 6. Now did we all take pattern by the Nature of God, as to this particular, we should not so much expect, as actually behold a kind of new Heaven and new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness. Those various sorts of Injustice, which vex, hurt, and harass Mankind, and are the causes of so much disorder, trouble, and mischief in the world, they are the more vocal and crying in the Ears of God, because they are contrary to his most Blessed and Perfect Nature. Those Fraudulent Minds, which conceive Dishonesty, and contrive Acts to bring it to pass; those Double, False, and Lying Tongues, which set on fire the course of Nature, and are themselves set on fire of Hell; and especially those Oppressing and Tyrannical Hands, which shed Innocent Blood, act Cruelties, invade other mens Possessions, commit Rapine and Robbery, defile themselves with Sacrilege, detain Rights from whom they are due, extort Properties, lay hold on the Widow's House, or the Priest's Maintenance; are partial in the distribution of common Justice; and, for Lucre or Ambition sake, forbear nothing that is Injurious and Base: These several kinds, and all other

Acts of Unrighteousness and Dishonesty, must needs be highly dishonourable and reproachful to Human Nature, because they are utterly repugnant to God's; and for that reason cannot but be odious and abominable in his sight.

3. And then, *Thirdly*, If we consider him under the notion of a Gracious Being, so he acteth with such kindness, benignity, and goodness towards his whole Creation, and especially towards the Sons of Men, that were it possible for God not to be, the World would be very miserable without him. He continually inspecteth and taketh care of the Universe, *so that not so much as a little sparrow falleth to the ground without his providence*, Matth. 10. 29. *He is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Psal. 145. 9. Though he takes a more particular care of Righteous Men (supplying all their Wants; numbring their very Hairs; supporting them in all their Trials; making all things to work together for their good: In short, Loving them to the end, and communicating to them all the Happiness which their Hearts can desire, or their Natures are capable of enjoying); yet his General Providence is daily over the vilest people

people too. *For he maketh his sun to shine upon the evil, as well as the good; and sends his rain upon the just, and unjust also,* Mat. 5. 45. And though he hath power in his hand to dash them into their primitive Nothing; nay, to consign them to a State which is worse than nothing; yet he sheweth his Power chiefly by Acts of Compassion and Mercy; being patient towards all; *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,* 1 Pet. 3. 9. And when by the Long-suffering and Goodness of God wicked People are led to Repentance, then he pardoneth their Iniquities, Transgressions, and Sins; and all this, freely, of his meer Grace and Goodness; because he is a God of Love, Benignity, and Compassion, whose Mercy endureth for ever.

And what is the cause of all that Inhumanity and Uncharitableness that is in the world, but that evil Wretches follow not the Example of God's Blessed Nature, nor indeed mind it? Hence it is, that they shut up their Bowels from the Necessitous; grind the faces of the Poor; vex the Innocent; sow strife; are full of bitterness and wrath; delight to be implacable; give their minds to envy, rancour,

cour, and Malice; meditate revenge; take a pride in unmercifulness, rigour, and severity; and instead of blessing, and forgiving their Enemies, as the Good God doth, provoke and irritate them still, and heap up Coals of Fire in a Bad sense, not to melt and intender their hearts, but to ruin and consume them, that they may rejoice and triumph at their Calamities.

The sum of this Consideration is, That those Vices which defile and pollute the Consciences of People, proceed from not observing, and not imitating the Nature of God, which should be a Law to all our Purposes and Actions. Whereas, if they did set God always before their eyes, and thoroughly mind his Methods and Inclinations, and then be careful to act as he acteth, it would be impossible for them to intend, or do that which is sinful and irregular, because there would be a necessary correspondence and congruity between their Practice, and his Blessed Nature, which is the Rule and Measure of those things which are eternally good. Therefore, that you may be holy indeed, and as God is, exercise your mind often in the serious contemplation of his most Amiable

ble and Glorious Perfections, especially his Wisdom, Righteousness, Truth, Faithfulness, Clemency, Munificence, Love, Long-suffering, Forbearance; or in one word, Goodness: And let the same mind be in you, which is in him; make your ways answerable and correspondent unto his, and be sure in no case of moment and importance to go cross to the gracious bent and disposition of his Adorable and Perfect Nature.

But here you may be ready to ask me, Would you have me be a Divine, to understand the Perfections of God, which are the foundation of all Theology? Or, Is it possible for me to have a clear, true, and indubitable Idea of them, when among Divines themselves there have been such Controversies about God's Attributes, as are a plain argument, that some of them themselves do not understand them rightly?

Why, as to this, it is indeed too true, that divers have entertain'd very wrong notions of God's Attributes, representing the Holy one of *Israel* not as he is, but such a one as they would have him be: And among these, They are most grossly mistaken, who render God a Partial, Cruel, and Arbitrary Being, that
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delights in the misery of his Creatures, and displays his Power on purpose to torment them; which, they say, is therefore just, because it is God's Pleasure.

And for all these Mistakes, they alledge the Authority of some passages or other in the Holy Scripture, which either by mens natural weakness are not well understood, or by reason of their passions and prejudices are so perverted, that the study of God's Perfections is thereby rendred much more difficult and perplext, than otherwise it would be to minds that are rightly dispos'd. An Infelicity the more to be lamented, because there is not another Subject, the consideration whereof can be more delightful, useful and satisfactory, than this is, touching the glorious Perfections of God's Nature.

Therefore, that you may have a clear and certain Idea of it, I cannot think of such a ready way, as by recommending to your view the Perfections of that great Exemplar of Holiness, *who came into the world to declare the Father,* John 1. 18. that by discovering the excellencies which were in Christ, men might come to the easy knowledge of him, who

who from all eternity had communicated to him the Divine Essence, and consequently all those Glories and Perfections of his Nature, which ought to be our Pattern in order to a State of True Holiness.

God being a Spirit, it was impossible for man at any time to see him. *None hath seen the Father* (saith Christ) *save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father*, John 6. 46. Considering therefore how necessary to eternal life the knowledge of God is, it was requisite for God to give us an extraordinary Revelation of himself; and none was so fit to carry that Revelation, as the only begotten Son, who was in the Father's Bosom; and not only knew his Perfections by personal Intuition, but also communicated with him in those Perfections. And this was one reason of his taking Human Flesh upon him, and appearing in the likeness of men, that he might manifest God to us in such a way as was accommodated to our own Nature; for man being a Creature that takes his knowledge, for the most part, from the information of Sense, which conveys Idea's to his mind and reason; the most proper way for the Son of God to shew
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the world the Glories of the Divine Nature was, to converse with people familiarly in their own. By this means they did (in an human way) behold his Glory, (not only his Divine Power, by the Miracles he did , but those moral Perfections and Beauties which are essential to the Deity, the Glory of his Father, and of himself; they beheld, I say) *the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, Joh. 1. 14. Hence the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls him, *Hebr. 1. 3. the brightness of God's Glory*, (that is, the most splendid Beam or Ray whereby we discover the glorious excellencies of God's Nature) *and the express Image of his Person*; wherein were delineated all those Divine Perfections which are manifestations of God, and ought to be our Pattern and Rule. And hence our Saviour himself told the Pharisees, John 8. 19. *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also.* And to the same effect he told his Disciples, John 14. 7. *From henceforth ye know my Father, and have seen him.* And when Philip desired him to shew them the Father, Jesus said unto him, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then,*
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Shew us the Father ? ver. 9. All which cannot be understood of seeing God's Essence, for that is altogether invisible ; but of knowing and discovering the moral Perfections and Attributes of God, which were equally in the Father and the Son ; so that by seeing the one, we know and discern the nature of both.

Therefore that in your Purposes and Actions you may go by a sure and clear Rule, *Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*, who did not only declare God's Will in the ears of men, but represented his Nature before their eyes, by his own Actions ; so that they had certain, plain, and ocular evidence of that, which was to be their Pattern. Christ's wonderful Humility was a lively representation of God's great condescension, *who not only humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth*, as the Holy Psalmist speaks, *Psal. 113, 6.* but hath been pleased all along to lower and abase himself in all his works of Grace towards a sinful world, and especially in the mysterious work of our Redemption. The most endearing love of Christ, in coming to seek, and to save that which was lost, was a manifestation of the infinite love of
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of his Father, *who gave him for us, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* This exemplary meekness of Christ throughout his whole life, was a sensible Comment upon the Text, *Psal. 145. 8. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy.* Christ's abundant Benignity in relieving, succouring, feeding those who came to him, and in going about a doing good, visibly shew'd the Riches of God's Goodness, who made the world to communicate his Goodness, and by his Providence doth daily support the Faculties and Beings of his Creatures, *that wait all upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season, Psal. 104. 27.* The universal Conformity of Christ to the Will of God, was an Argument of the entire rectitude of God's own Will, and of its Conformity in all things to the eternal Prescriptions of Righteousness and Reason. Christ's Patience under all his Sufferings, was a Declaration of the forbearance and long suffering of his Father, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be led to Repentance. His readiness to pardon the Sins of People, was an expression of that
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great mercy of God, *which is over all his works*, and which God extendeth to all that are capable of forgiveness, by their sincere Repentance from all dead works. Christ's Charity to his most malicious and bloody Enemies, in praying for them even at the last gasp, was a representation of God's Nature, who is pitiful even to those that hate him; spares them, though they deserve punishment; and is open handed to evil and unjust men themselves, who have their Portion in this life, as well as his own Children. In short, *God was manifested in the flesh*; to shew us that Divine Nature in our own; and to give us Idea's of the excellencies of God's Essence, in such a way as is suitable to the condition of our Being, that we may infallibly and evidently see our way to be Holy, as God is Holy, viz. by making our minds and practice correspondent to his, *in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily*; Col. 2. 9.

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CHAP.

C H A P. X.

4. **I** Have been the more copious upon this Point, touching the Nature of God, because the making that our Pattern, is a concise, plain, and certain method of acquiring and perfecting Holiness; for the Pattern propos'd is the Sanctity of God himself. And yet considering that too much cannot be said upon a subject of such vast Concernment and Necessity, I shall proceed on further to that which I would recommend to you in the fourth place, which is, that you be careful to act always upon a Principle of Conscience.

By Conscience I mean here, a powerful sense of that inward goodness and excellence which is in every virtuous Action.

Now here I am to shew these two things: 1. *First*, That in some Actions there is an inward natural Goodness, which ought to be a Principle to govern men. 2. And, *Secondly*, That to act upon that Principle, is a ready means of being Holy.

1. That in some Actions there is an inward, natural Goodness, which should be

be a Principle to govern us. As there is a necessary, eternal and immutable difference between Truth and Falshood, so that what is true cannot be false, and what is false cannot be true; in like manner there is a necessary, eternal, and immutable difference between good and evil; so that what is good cannot be evil, and what is evil cannot be good. Now this difference proceeds not (as the Sceptricks of our Age are willing to imagine) from Institution, Pact and Agreement among men, but is really founded on the very nature of the things themselves. Those known Propositions, that the Whole is more than a Part; that One and Two make Three; that the Cause is antecedent to the Effect; and divers Verities more of that kind; they are so necessarily and evidently certain, that whosoever understandeth the meaning of the words, must presently assent to the truth of the Propositions, because the light and evidence of them is congenial to the Soul of man; and though all Mankind do agree in the certainty of them, yet they are not therefore true because we assent to them, but therefore we assent to them because they are naturally true. Why thus it is as to Actions

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also; there are some which all Mankind that have the use of Reason, and will hearken to it, must acknowledge to be good; as to worship God; to respect and honour our Parents; to deal with others as we would be dealt with our selves; and divers things more of this kind, they are unalterably and manifestly righteous. Nor doth the goodness of them depend on Human Institution or Approbation; but the Reason and Nature of the Actions is antecedent to all this, and therefore do we agree in our sense touching the practicableness of them, because they are essentially and intrinsically good. There is not a fictitious, but a native beauty, necessity and excellence in the things themselves, which eternally obligeth all men to the practice of them; and to do them for the sake of that natural obligation, and for the inward necessity they carry along with them; this is to act upon a Principle of Conscience, because it is the sense of the real goodness and obligatory nature of the virtues themselves, which doth encourage, direct, and govern a man in acting.

Upon this Principle then you are to move throughout the whole course of your

your life; and do whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, and whatsoever things are lovely, not for shame, or for fear, or upon any sinister and by-inducement, but for Conscience-sake; because it is your duty; and because it is that which the Law of God, the reason and nature of the things themselves makes necessary to be done.

St. Paul, speaking of the old Heathens, tells us, in Rom. 2. 14. *That when they had not the law, they did by nature the things contained in the law, and were a law unto themselves.* Meaning, That tho they had no formed Precepts given them by Divine Revelation, nor put into their hands by the ministry of a Mediator, as the Jews had, who receiv'd the Two Tables from God by the hands of Moses; yet they had the substance of the Law written in their Consciences; and those common notions of Good and Evil which they had by Natural Instinct, were unto them a Rule of Morality. They shewed the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts among themselves accusing, or else excusing them, as the Apostle speaks there, v. 15. That is, by the

Convictions they had of the excellence and necessity of Virtue, they made it appear, that they discover'd of themselves, by the light of common Human Reason, that there were some things right, and some things wrong in their own nature; and as a further argument thereof, their own Consciences did always testify either for, or against them. They had inward satisfaction or smart, hopes or fears, upon their minds, according as they did either good or evil. All which did certainly proceed from a natural sense of that desert of Rewards or Punishment which was in the things themselves; and by consequence, of that congruity or incongruity, that rectitude or deformity, that goodness or improbity, which was intrinsical in all their Actions.

And to illustrate the Apostle's meaning, Whoever shall consult the best Writers among the old Heathens, as well before, as since our Saviour's days, will find what excellent things the natural Consciences of those men spake. For, they had many fair and sublime Notions of God himself; of his Majesty, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctity, Goodness, and Providence over the World;

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so they worshipt him, in their way, with great reverence ; with a grave and a forward zeal. And as for those Virtues which relate to Mankind, the wiser and better sort of Heathens have been eminent Examples ; I wish it might not be said, a shame to many who now profess the Christian Religion. In short ; notwithstanding the flaws which were in some of their Actions, their Notions of the Excellence of Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety, were so rational and solid, and their Lives were such fair Comments upon them, as shew plainly, that in those Moral Virtues, and Eternal Duties which Christianity requires, there is an inward and essential goodness of Nature.

Nay, how many poor Wretches are there at this day in some remote parts of the World, who though they believe nothing of the Gospel, perhaps never heard of a Saviour and Lawgiver from Heaven ; no, nor so much as of a *Socrates*, *Plutarch*, or *Seneca* ; do yet see, by the light of that little Reason they have, that there are many things which are good in themselves, and which naturally oblige to the practice of them ; and accordingly, as those people express a sense

of a Deity (such as it is;) so in Civil Matters they observe those Laws of Morality they find written in their hearts; especially in Commerce and Traffick; being just and honest in their dealings between man and man; and faithful to their Promises and Contracts, tho they have not those Positive, External Laws of Government which other more Civiliz'd Nations enjoy.

Seeing then even Pagans and Infidels act upon a Principle of Conscience, for the sake of that inward goodness and necessity there is in Virtue; much more are we obliged to act upon that Principle, whose Consciences are not merely natural, but illuminated by him, *who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. Our Knowledge is far greater and clearer than what the Heathens had; it is an high, holy, and heavenly Calling whereunto we are called; and therefore of all men, Christians should be most careful to move in all cases conscientiously upon such a divine Principle as is suitable to their holy Profession. The more honourable the Person is, the more odious and abominable always is the Sinner; because there are many things which
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are not only Crimes, but Indecencies also; especially where a man's outward Quality and Condition should set him above them. As, for one that bears a great figure in the world, to steal, to defraud, to undermine, to be covetous, to be spiteful, to lye, to be false to the Nuptial-Bed, and to use those mean and fordid Arts which are customary among the Trashy and Refuse part of Mankind; these things are both criminal, and very unbecoming; gross, hateful, and scandalous Indecencies. In like manner for a Christian to act upon low and base Considerations; for him, who hath the Will of God revealed unto him; for him, who hath good and evil, life and death, so clearly set before him; for him, who is one of a *chosen generation, of a royal priesthood, of an holy nation, and of a peculiar people, that should shew forth the praises of him who hath called us all out of darkness into his marvelous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. for such a one, I say, to act otherwise than upon a Principle of Conscience, and for Reasons grounded on the nature of things; this is both transgression, and shame too; most unbecoming, unsuitable, and ignominious. *If I had not come and spoke un-*

to them, they had not had sin, saith our Saviour; but now they have no cloak for their sin, John 14. 22. In all Cases, the more a man knows, the more grievous is his Crime, if he doth not move by the light that is in his Conscience; and the honefter sort of Heathens will rise up in judgment against him, and will condemn him; for they condemned and eschewed evil upon a principle of Conscience, because the things were evil in their own nature; quite contrary to the eternal Dictates of right Reason. What a scandal is this, that Nature should afford many burning and shining Lights, and that Revelation should produce such pitiful Glowworms? Nay, and that the little light they cast, should be disparaged and blemish'd by their manifold works of darkness?

Therefore, that you may be holy indeed, be sure to have an eye to the nature of the things you are about, and to act accordingly, upon a Principle drawn from the honesty of the Actions. For they that order their Practice upon any by Motives, either for some worldly Advantage, or for Popularity sake, or for fear of Civil Punishment, or out of compliance with the Laws of the Realm,

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or the like; do plainly shew, that they act upon force and compulsion; and would do otherwise if it were safe for them; and consequently, whatever their outward Actions are, their minds must needs be impure.

For Conscience-sake you must adore and love God, and obey his Will, because it is a thing which is naturally good; a duty you owe the Author of your Being, the sole Arbiter and Disposer of all your Fortunes. For Conscience-sake you must abstain from all Pollutions of Flesh and Spirit, because it is impiety to abuse that Body and Soul which was given you to set forth the Glory of your Creator. For Conscience-sake you must use other people as you would be used your self, because your own heart can tell you, that the thing is righteous. For Conscience-sake you must render to all their dues, *Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, and honour to whom honour*; because whether you save or lose by it, the thing is in it self right and equal. For Conscience-sake you must not do any manner of Injustice or Wrong, because it is repugnant to those Laws of common Reason which Heathens themselves have observed in all Ages. For Con-

Conscience-sake you must be kind, loving, and compassionate towards all Mankind; and charitable to your very Enemies; because it is good, great, and honourable, to be like unto the Blessed God, whose tender mercies are over all his works. In short; You must in all cases act as carefully for Conscience-sake, and upon a Principle of Conscience, as if the Magistrate stood continually by you with the Sword in his hand; and indeed much more, because God is always by you, who seeth and knoweth your heart, and is the Avenger of all evil.

Were there no other Laws, that which is written in every one of our hearts should powerfully move men to live well, as far as their knowledge goes. All good men will have a strict regard to that, because it is such a great and natural tie upon the Conscience; and 'tis the wickedness of the world that hath given the Civil Magistrate the trouble of prescribing Rules, and of inflicting Punishments: of all which there would be very little need, if people were so honest, as to act upon the known Principles of Conscience and Religion, and for the sake of that inward goodness and necessity that is in Virtue.

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2. This being so clear, that in some things there is an inward, natural goodness, which ought, as a Principle, to govern mens Actions; I proceed now to shew what an effectual and ready way this would be to make them Holy. And this too will soon appear, if we consider but these two things following.

1. *First*, To act upon a Principle of Conscience, will keep the very Mind undefiled; for if a man doth that which is right and good, for the love of goodness, and for this noble reason, because the thing is excellent in it self, and agreeable to the divine nature, he must needs abhor the very thoughts of that which is vile, base, and evil. The Principle he moveth upon is in the heart, and as long as it is vigorous there, it will keep off all wicked contrivances and intentions, as well as guard him from an abominable work. All filthiness of the flesh floweth from *corruption in the heart*; there it begins, and thence proceed those things which defile the man; evil designs, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, and the like, *Matth. 15. 19.* So that if the heart be rotten and impure, the thing will be done the next tempting opportunity;

nity ; for nothing but opportunity can be wanting, when there is no good Principle to govern, and when Conscience is once laid aside ; whereas to a man that loves Virtue for Virtue's sake, a vicious mind is as hateful as a wicked hand ; and indeed more, because it is the heart that sets it on work. Hence is that of Solomon, Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life.* A bare external Sanctity avails nothing, because it proceeds from a principle of shame, human policy, caution, and such other inducements as are very consistent with an ill mind, which lies lurking all the while under hypocrisy and shew. 'Tis only a principle of Conscience, a true sense of the Duty we owe to God and man, that can keep the whole Soul in a right, good state, because Conscience, when duly informed, will tell us, that there is Adultery in the eye, and Murder in the desire and wish, that bringeth under condemnation, by reason that all affections for Sin have a natural obliquity and turpitude in them.

2. *Secondly*, To act upon a Principle of Conscience, will help you to go on after a steady, uniform, and even manner in the

the ways of Holiness ; for the Principle it self being a fixt love of goodness for God and goodness sake, the heart which is governed by it cannot but be still drawing to the right way, like a Needle touched with a Loadstone, that is always pointing towards the North ; and by this means there will be a happy prevention of such gross Inconsistencies, and irreconcilable Variations as are in the Lives of those whose great Principle is to move or stand, to rise or fall, as if they were so many little Machines, according to the condition of the weather.

Indeed Conscience is a thing that is still capable of further information, especially in many particular odd Cases, which are not to be decided but by such Reason as we have, and by the fairest Arguments we can draw from Laws, which are for the most part general. *Here we know but in part ;* and that imperfect light we enjoy, we gather by degrees ; because we are Creatures whose faculties are naturally limited and narrow. Now considering this great defect and infirmity that is in our very frame, we must be careful to do as well as we can, according to the utmost of our power ; seriously and firmly resolving to
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act nothing but what shall appear to us to be good, and what we shall truly judge in our Consciences to be right and lawful. By this means, what we want in point of knowledge, we shall make up by our honesty; and we shall always move steddily, because we shall still follow the best light we have, as we verily apprehend things to be necessary or justifiable. I think it is as impossible to be so uniform in all Circumstances, as to live without the least Error, as it is to live without all manner of Sin; for some Contingencies may happen, which the wit of man cannot foresee; and some Cases may be so perplext, that no one man can unravel all the Intricacies of them; and because in such Cases Particulars cannot be determin'd but from General Rules, by reason that no Laws have made special provision against all Accidents; therefore it cannot be expected, but that on some hand or other there will be mistakes; and where there is an Error, notwithstanding the best search we have made, there we should all be so charitable, as to make each other an allowance for our Human Imperfections; we may be sure, the God of Mercy and Compassion will make us large allowances

ances for them. For though there be defect in the Understanding, yet the Conscience is right; because the mind is still set upon that which is really good; and the Conscience doth its office regularly, in directing the Will according as the goodness of the Action doth appear; and as long as a man goes thus honestly upon a Principle of Conscience, he must needs be secure from those Inconsistencies and Deviations, which others are guilty of, who act upon Motives which are of a different nature. As for instance.

Some go merely upon a principle of slavish Fear; lest they should come within the reach of the Laws, and be punished for an evil Action, which otherwise they would do. These are govern'd purely with a Rod, and are kept in order no longer than while the Rod is held over them: Which shews, that the Restraints that are upon them, proceed not from Conscience, but are External and Temporary; like the Restraints that were upon the *Egyptian Pharaoh*, for a little time; while he saw God's Rod in the hand of *Moses*. As soon as the Judgments it caused, were over, he return'd to his Temper, and hardned his heart

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still. And such are the transient Fits of those, who make good Professions when the Magistrate begins to lift up his hand, or when Death seemeth to be coming, or when some unusual Punishment overtakes them. Then they are Saints on a sudden; but when once the danger and smart is gone, they commit Iniquity with greediness, confidence, and obstinacy: A plain Argument, that they act not upon a Principle of Conscience; or, out of a true, inward sense of their Duty.

Others there are, who go upon a Principle of Popularity; and for Pride, Ambition, and Vanity sake, make a fair shew, that they may be had in admiration, and have people at their command, as occasion serves. This is just the Sanctity of the *Pharisees*, who prayed, and fasted, and gave Alms, that they might be seen of men; and yet were inwardly such ravenous Creatures, as could devour and swallow Camels, Widows Houses, and all which their very Parents should live upon. And such like Wretches are they, who are Professors of Religion at the Church, and Apostates from it at home. They, who know how to be lewd under a Curtain; who give wounds behind

behind the back ; who disseminate strife and lies with studied Artifices ; who defraud and oppress under a pretence of right ; not stick at any Injustice or Villany, which they can but carry off with a Boon grace. These Tricks, Turnings, and Difformities between Pretence and Practice, are an evident sign that such men want a good Principle, a Principle of Conscience, that would make them move, if they had it, with regularity and steddiness ; like a Ship that steers a fair, even course, when well laden with due Ballast, and a full Cargo.

There are others yet that act upon a Principle of Avarice ; that are humble Servants to Religion, as those Silversmiths were to *Diana*, Acts 19. They cried up her, and her Magnificence, because by making Shrines for her, they gained their Wealth. And people that thus aim altogether at their Interest, can never be firm, or true to any thing else: For that still shall be godliness to them which is most for their advantage ; so that for the Bag-sake they will follow Christ, and for Thirty pieces more will betray him.

In short ; Such as act upon any other Principle, but that of Conscience, consi-

der not what is good, or what is evil, but what is most for their present turn; and by consequence their Actions will vary, as it is best for their own Ends: Which being quite different from the Ends of Religion, must needs render them perverse and crooked, at least uncertain and unstable in all their ways.

Therefore, that you may acquire and perfect Holiness indeed, it is highly necessary for you to order all your Actions according to the condition and nature of things. You must eschew Evil, not so much to prevent Disgrace, or Pain, or loss of Mammon, but for Conscience-sake; because all Actions of that kind are, in themselves, base, filthy, and unreasonable. You must do justly, love mercy, walk humbly, lead a godly, righteous, and sober Life, not by compulsion, or to gain applause, or secular advantage, or for the sake of such by, and mean ends; but upon a Principle of Conscience; because there is in Vertue and Piety an inward Excellence, which eternally and immutably obligeth the Conscience. They carry with them a native beauty, which renders them lovely and desirable: An intrinsic Goodness which is inseparable from them; a necessity
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founded on the common Dictates of Right Reason : And to act like a Man, and a Christian, is to do them because they would be amiable, excellent, good, and necessary, though there were nothing else to exact the performance of them, besides those everlasting Laws which Religion and Nature have charged upon our Consciences. This is the true way to make you have holy hands, and an holy heart too ; and to render you so fixt and steddy in the practice of Holiness, that as long as you keep to the Rule of Conscience, you can no more change your Course, than you can change the natures of Good and Evil ; which is impossible.

C H A P. XI.

5. **T**HE next means of acquiring and perfecting Holiness is, to guard your self very carefully against all Occasions of Sin. By the Occasions of Sin, I mean not only such things as are immediately productive of Vice by direct and natural Causality (as, Pride bringeth forth Contention ; Hatred Revenge ; Covetousness Injustice ; Intem-

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perance Lust; and the like) but moreover such things as fall in accidentally, and by the by, to help a vicious act on; as Idleness, Gaming, Sports, Vanity, inordinate and unseasonable Recreations, and many Actions of that kind, as minister to Wickedness, and tend towards it, though they do not cause it by a direct stroke, or natural efficiency. Now 'tis an unwise thing to be in the neighbourhood of danger; for he that dwells near it, cannot be safe long; and to think of being at a distance from Sin, without providing against the Occasions of it, is to imitate the folly of one that would defend a City without taking care of the Outworks. Our Saviour bids us to part with a Hand, a Foot, an Eye, when it offends us, in *Matt. 18*. By which Expressions is meant, whatsoever serves to ensnare the Soul; all inlets of Sin; all incentives of it; all temptations, beginnings and means of Impurity; and whatever invites and ministers to it, or serves to entertain it. Whether it be Pleasure, or Interest that betrays us; how dear soever, and how useful soever the thing may be in other cases; if it prove an instrument of wickedness, it must be removed and cast away, though
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it be done with great reluctance and severity. The reason is, because to approach to danger, is the ready way of falling into it; and the nearer a temptation, or opportunity lies, the sooner will the Sin be acted: And therefore it is very adviseable to keep off from it as long as we can. These things are very clear of themselves; and therefore I shall not spend any more time upon Generals; but think it better to offer some particular Methods, which may fully answer the ends of this great Rule, about guarding your self against all occasions of Sin.

1. And the first Method is, *To be temperate in all things*, 1 Cor. 9. 25. that is, to abstain from the excessive enjoyment of all Bodily Pleasures. Because Pleasure is, above all other Temptations, agreeable and friendly to the sensitive part of our Nature; nothing doth so easily fascinate and corrupt our Inclinations; and consequently, nothing can be more prejudicial to our Reason, or obstructive of true Holiness, than carnal Delights are; especially such Delights as we are most prone unto, by means of familiar use and custom. In St. Peter's language, 1 Pet. 2. 11. *They war against the soul*: Betray-

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ing it to a great many Sins, the guilt whereof it might have been otherwise free from, by a sober use of those Creatures which God intended, not to make us wanton, but to relieve our Necessities. Drunkenness, Gluttony, Lasciviousness, and such like Sensualities, are the natural causes, not only of corrupt and filthy Desires, but of various open and scandalous Wickednesses, which drown men in destruction and perdition, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. And besides, such Sensualities have a direct tendency to debauch the Reason, and to spoil those Faculties whereby Reason works; so that vicious People are incapable of that knowledge of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, wherein Eternal Life consisteth; and for want of that knowledge, they call good evil, and evil good; God by a just judgment, delivering them up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, for their pursuing those Sensualities, which make them like unto the Beasts that perish. The Ancient Christians, who kept a steady eye upon the Laws of Holiness, rightly considering what Spiritual Mischiefs come by Pleasures and Plethora's, like Wise Physicians prevented dangers by revulsion; accustoming themselves to such austere
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forts of Discipline, as made them Temptation-proof even against their own Natures, where the most prevalent Temptations usually lodge, because they are domestick. Instead of feeding high, and drinking deep; instead of pampering the Flesh, or humouring their Carnal Appetites, they chose the Bread of Affliction; and corrected their natural Inclinations by a great variety of Mortifications and Severities, according to the strictest Rules of Abstinence and Chastity; *that by any means they might keep their bodies under, and bring them in subjection*, as St. Paul did his, 1 Cor. 9. 27. And questionless, would men be but temperate in the use of God's Creatures, though not altogether so severe as the Primitive Saints were, it would be an excellent way to keep them from lashing out into those Immoralities, which are such a Scandal to Religion, and to Common Honesty: It would be a great help to Devotion, to Humility, to Patience, to Self denial, to Heavenly-mindedness, and to that Purity of heart which must help us to see God; especially if it were a state of Temperance, not a few Acts for now and then a day; I mean, if people would be persuaded to observe a
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constant *series* and course, and to lead a life of Sobriety.

2. Another method of cutting off the occasions of Sin, and consequently of acquiring and perfecting Holiness, is, to be always well employed in some honest or lawful Business ; either in the works of our particular Callings, or in works of Necessity, Charity, Piety, Prudence, and the like. Some people lie directly in the Devil's way, because they take such courses as lead them into the midst of Temptations. And to this purpose *Tertullian*, in his Book *de Spectaculis*, tells a remarkable Story of a Christian Woman that went into the Theatre to see an Heathen Stage-Play, and returned possest with an unclean spirit. And when the Exorcist demanded of the spirit, How he durst attempt that Religious Person ? The Devil's Answer was, *In meo eam Inveni*, I found her in my Road and Dominion. In such a dangerous way are all idle persons, who, instead of employing their precious hours in offices of Religion, and in doing others and themselves good, either give themselves up to sloth and laziness, or betake themselves to loose Company, and into places of Licentiousness and Debauchery,

chery, to throw away that time there, which at home hangs upon their fingers. Whoever are out of the Devil's Road, such idle people are always in it; and the Temptations they expose themselves unto, ensnare them with the greater certainty and ease, because they invite the Tempter. The Tares our Saviour spake of, *Matth. 13.* were sown in the night, while men were asleep. And as Errors so are Vices, disseminated in the world for want of due vigilance; nor are there many Vices, but what Idleness is either an immediate cause, or a great occasion of. You may be sure the Devil has then a fair opportunity of being at hand, when men fold up their arms as if they had nothing to do. None of us came into the world with that privilege; nor is there any state of life, but what we may all find business enough in, if we will conscientiously attend it, and look after it. Even a retired life hath its great employments; to contemplate, to advise, to entertain continual thoughts of heart, and to pray for the good of those whom God hath called to more ordinary occupations, that they may minister to others with the hand, as others minister to them by their wisdoms and cares.

cares. By the sweat of the Brow, or the Brain, we must all live; and if people would but diligently follow the works to which God in his Providence hath set them, they might turn that which was once a Curse for Sin, into an excellent Preservative against it. The mind of man is a very busy thing, there is a principle of activity in its nature; and the objects about it are so various and powerful, that it is easily invited to run out upon some thing or other, and consequently to be either well or ill employed. Therefore the sure way of preventing all occasions of Sin, is to be always about that which is either laudable, or, at least, innocent: and by dividing your time between these two sorts of things, you will be out of the reach of Temptations, or in a capacity of defeating them; because, how industrious soever the Devil be, he cares not to work in vain. By being thus resisted, he will flee from you; and by degrees will cease to tempt, where he finds all his endeavours and allurements to be thrown away.

3. A third method of guarding your self against occasions of Sin, To provide against those Enormities you are most prone and inclined to commit. Though

Though the Devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour, yet there is no question but he is many times wrongfully accused; and charged with Crimes which proceed not so much from without, as from within our own selves.

Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed, Jam. I. 14.

Now those Lusts are different, according as mens natural Tempers and Constitutions are different; or according as the different ends are which they pursue; or according as those different courses of life are which they have used and accustomed themselves unto. By these means one is more subject and addicted to this or that particular Vice, than another is; and your care must be to observe what your own Vice or Infirmary is, and with due application of mind to use suitable remedies and provision against it: For the Devil seldom assaults but on the weakest side, where a man lieth most open and expos'd to dangers of captivity; and when your own Inclinations are in confederacy with him, he will be sure of a Surrender. The truth is, a man's own Inclinations are such treacherous things, that there is no holding out against them, but by the most sturdy

sturdy resolution, especially when they are within the view of their desired enjoyments; then they must be very diligently watcht as Rebels and Traytors, that want nothing but an opportunity. Your worst enemies are those of your own house; and whatever you guard your mind against, be sure to have a constant jealousy over your self.

Where a man's Inclinations are very untoward, 'twere good to act (at least for some time) quite contrary to what he was wont. For though extremes are commonly bad, and in many cases it is unreasonable and dangerous to run out of one extreme to fix in another; yet when we are to deal with our evil Natures, one effectual way of bringing them to rights, is to use our selves to that which we are most averse from, till we have wrought our propensions into a due temper and state. He that will straighten a crooked twig, must first bend it quite the other way: There is a natural faculty and power in it that will reduce it in some measure; and so between nature and force, the Branch, though somewhat stubborn, will grow as the manager would have it. And thus we should do in cultivating our crooked Inclinations,

ons, that we may regulate and improve them: We should accustom our selves a while to such practices, as are directly opposite to the condition of our former life; which is from one extreme to turn off to another, that by degrees we may be reclaimed to a mediocrity, because there is such strength in our Nature and in old Habits, as will draw us fast enough back from an excess on the right hand, and indeed too fast if we be not careful. Thus Drunkards and Gluttons should for a considerable space make use of the *Xerophagia* that were in vogue in the Primitive Ages of Christianity; such dry and comfortless fare, as will in time bring them to a life of Sobriety, and make them very well satisfied and pleas'd with it: Slanderers, Lyars, Common-Swearers, and such other Pests among Mankind, should imitate in some measure the old *Pythagoreans*, enjoin themselves the penance of Silence, till they have reclaimed their lewd Tongues to that temperate and profitable manner of Discouraging, which is the end of Language: Men of inordinate and unreasonable Passions, should try how far the Stoicks Insensibility is practicable, that by a great dulness at resenting, the motions of
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the Irascible faculty may be kept from breaking out into Wrath, and that all Wrath may be kept from settling into Hatred or Malice. In short, though People must not run out of one Vice into another, yet where Irregularities have extremes which are not formally, and in themselves sinful, there they should go, as near as they can, with Innocence, from the one hand to the contrary; that by overstraining a little, and for a time, they may gradually force, as it were, their accustomed Dispositions into good Order. This is a proper way for men to be too hard for themselves, to be rid of those evil Courses which they are more particularly and more strongly addicted to; and so an effectual means of guarding themselves against many Sins, which their own Tempers are the occasion of, whatever the cause of an ill Temper was, whether Nature, or Custom, or both.

Which shews how Instrumental this would be in order to the Acquiring and Perfecting of Holiness. For Human Virtue lyeth, for the most part, in the middle, between Deficiency and Excess. Though there be some Divine Graces, in the exercise whereof we cannot exceed

ceed (as we cannot Love God too much, nor Adore him too much, nor Resemble him too much, and the like) yet generally speaking, the goodness of a Christian's life consisteth in Moderation; and then is his Soul in a right state when he has gained such a Mastery over his own Heart, as that his Inclinations are become Regular, and his Affections brought under his Power and Government. A Mind so well subdued cannot lead him into Sin, nor be unto him an occasion of Falling.

4. *Fourthly*, There is yet one way more of securing your self from occasions of Sin; and that is, to Resist and Suppress every Temptation in the beginnings of it, whence-soever the Temptation comes, whether from abroad, or from within our own breasts, it is still but a Temptation; that is, an offer made of some Advantage, or Pleasure, if we will Sin. Now we cannot expect to be utterly free from such solicitations as long as there is a Satan in the World; and as long as we have Flesh and Blood about us: Nay, we must not think to be invulnerable, or to live totally void of all sense of Temptations, no more than to be out of the reach of them:

For it is as natural to be somewhat affected with alluring Objects, as it is to wink with the Eye when a blow is given it. The thing we Pray for daily is, *That God will not lead us into Temptation*; that is, that he will not suffer us to be overcome or hurt by it, nor suffer any Temptation to prevail so over us, as to captivate and ensnare us: And this is much more than to be Tempted; the difference between being alluring and conquering, is as great as between a slight wound and death: This follows not but upon our consenting to the Temptation, and complying with it; and to prevent mortality in this case, a better way there cannot be, than to repel the first offer with an obstinate denial, because it is far less difficult to stifle an irregular motion, than it is to recover out of a state of sin; as it is easier to resist an Onset than to Rally; or to keep out an Enemy, than to Dispossess him, when once he has gotten hold.

Now were this mens care to strangle the first conceptions of sin, 'twould obviate and hinder a thousand mischiefs, which their too easie compliance is both the occasion and cause of. 1. First, It would prevent all danger of a train of wicked-

wickednesses; for seldom doth any sin go alone, but is led on or seconded by more. So *David's* fall was occasioned by the Lust of his Eye, and then he fell still further and further, by actual Adultery next, then by many wicked and studied artifices, till at last he proceeded to downright bloodshed. And though *Peter's* Apostacy seems to have been occasioned by mere Cowardice, yet his denial of Christ was followed by sinful Oaths and Imprecations. These Two sad instances were enough to shew, did not our daily experience make it more appear, that Vice is of a very Prolifick nature, and that the readiest course we can take to be out of danger of the Cocatrices, is, to crush them all in the very egg. 2. Secondly, to suppress thus the first beginnings of sin, will keep the Heart clean; that's the nest wherein the Egg is laid, and thence proceeds all that deadly offspring which follow one another in a great retinue: So that to stifle the first motions and formations of Evil there with a diligent and quick hand, is to guard your self thoroughly against all occasions of sin at once, and by direct consequence, to keep your self in that clean condition from all filthiness of Flesh

and Spirit, wherein Real, Substantial, and Personal Holiness hath been shewed to consist.

C H A P. XII.

6. **F**OR the Perfecting whereof, the thing proposed in the Sixth place, was to go on in an holy course with Patience and Christian Fortitude. For let a man be never so Religious, God-like, Sincere, Circumspect, and Watchful, he must expect nevertheless to meet with many difficulties and discouragements here in the World. Such men are so far from being exempt from hardships, that they are many times more expos'd to them than others are; and that by the special Providence of God, who is wont to pick and chuse out some Persons more particularly, whom he makes and finds to be the properest to shew the mighty Power of Virtue and Religion by their manifold trials, and to Glorifie God in this militant state by their Conflicts with men and Devils. Every one is not fit to be cast naked on a dunghil there to scrape his Boyls; or to suffer for dealing plainly with a lewd *Herod*; or to endure
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Stoning for declaring the Truth; or to lye under such an heap of pressures as we find cast up, *Heb. 11.* or to wander about in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth; or to be tortured to death, not accepting deliverance, that they may obtain a better resurrection. Therefore God doth call out a *Job*, a *John Baptist*, a *Stephen*, a *Paul*, and other such Heroick examples of Patience and Constancy, to carry his Name, and to gain him Honour in the World. And as for those whose Strength and Courage is of a lower degree, God doth deal out to them proportionably, Hardships and Trials which are of a lesser size, and of a lighter nature; yet to every true Child of God some, that in the end we may all be made perfect by Sufferings in our way, as the Prince and Captain of our Salvation was in his.

Now whatever the condition of our Trials be, and from what hand soever they immediately come, in the midst of them we must bear up, neither flinching from our known Duties to God and man; nor being cast down or daunted under the sense of any Indignities, but in the way God hath set us, there we must go, and go on still, labouring, wrestling,

and persevering to the last ; and that with all possible composedness, temper, and chearfulness of mind. This is true Fortitude ; to be able to bear Evils with an unbroken, an undaunted Spirit ; and with an heart that is (to use *Ignatius's* the Holy Martyr's Comparison) *ὡς ἄκμων τοῦ πτελέου*, like an Anvil, that stands fixt, firm, and steddly, notwithstanding all the beatings of the Hammer. *Seneca* observes, *That Cruelty proceeds from a great weakness and ungenerosity that is in Nature ; for the most contemptible Animals can be vexatious.* Wasps can sting, and Pinniza's can bite ; and 'tis commonly noted, That the greatest Cowards among Mankind, are the greatest Oppressors, when they have power in their clutches. 'Tis the man of patience, of steddiness, and resolution under Wrongs and Injuries ; 'tis he that is the man of true Fortitude and Magnanimity : For this reason, among the rest, because he rules and sways in the most difficult Empire ; he governs and commands himself ; which no weak man doth, or can do, that is carried away with the fury of his brutish and unbridled Appetite.

Hence it appears, how perfective of Holiness Christian Patience and Fortitude is,

is, when duly exercised. For divers vicious and ill-natur'd Acts proceed from inordinate motions of the Soul, which would never be, did men compose their minds by patience and fortitude, when any disquieting Accidents either threaten or touch them. No sooner do such Evils appear, and seem to be at hand, but weak people are presently apt to make wrong Constructions, and to be ruffled with uncharitable Jealousies, with perplexing Amazements, with dejecting Fears and Sollicitudes, and with distrust and hard thoughts of the Divine Providence. And when once the Evils come to be felt, how wretchedly are people moved against the hand that brought them? Discontents immediately arise; and those attended with Anger, Envy, Bitterness, Fierceness, Hatred, malicious Purposes, and desires of Revenge: All which do not only set the Soul into disorder and tumult, but too often break forth into such Hostilities, as are a scandal to Religion, and very injurious to Civil Society. For the preventing of which foul Enormities, we are commanded, *To cast all our cares upon him who careth for us; in tribulation to be of good comfort; to take up our crosses with hu-*

mility and self-denial; to quit our selves like men; to put off anger, wrath, malice, and evil-speaking; to be strengthened with all might, unto all patience, and long-sufferance; and to bring forth those blessed fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, goodness, mercy, and the like. Now this is the office of Christian Fortitude, so to govern and compose our minds in the most difficult and severe Circumstances, that we may be as easie as 'tis possible our selves, and useful to others also, by expressing that magnanimity which becometh us, and by exercising all those Heroick Virtues which relate to the good and quiet of all Mankind. This is an effectual means to make us keep our selves unsported from the world; that is, from a great many Vices which reign in it, by reason of those weaknesses which are in men, and for want of those Principles of Religion which would inspire them with patience, and true greatness of mind; and would set them above those mean Passions, which are so unbecoming a Rational Nature.

C H A P. XIII.

7. **A**ND so I come at length to that which was propos'd in the last place, in order to the acquiring and perfecting of Holiness; namely, throughout the whole course of your life to carry in your mind the consideration of a Future State, and of that recompence of Reward which will be given them by a most Righteous and Good Hand, however you may be treated in this world. And here Two things are to be shewed: 1. *First*, The certainty of a Future State, wherein there will be a distribution of Rewards. 2. And *secondly*, how productive of Holiness the hearty consideration of that is.

1. *First*, As to the certainty of a Future State, wherein there will be a distribution of Rewards.

God knoweth his own Purposes; and therefore we are infallibly sure of the truth of that which he hath revealed to us, *Acts 17. 31. That he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world with righteousness; and that to them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory,*

glory, and honour, and immortality, he will render eternal life, Rom. 2. 7.

Indeed there is not any point of Faith, wherein all Mankind in all Ages have more unanimously agreed, than this Article is, touching the certainty of a Future State; though the quality and condition of it was not so distinctly and evidently understood in former times, as it hath been since the coming of Christ. Hence the Apostle tells us, *That our Saviour brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 2 Tim. 1. 10.* meaning, That he gave the world a more perspicuous, particular, and indubitable Account of the Rewards that shall be in another Life, than ever the Heathens, or the *Jews* themselves had. And yet from the beginning men have universally had some general Notions of a Future State: They are as common to us all as the belief of a Deity: Which is a fair Argument, that such a State there will infallibly be; because it is unconceivable how the Understandings of all Mankind could be deceived so all at once, by impressions which could not be made con-
nate to Human Reason, but by the great Author of our Beings, who intended by this common Principle to keep the whole
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whole world in awe. Our own Reason tells us what we are to expect hereafter; and if the voice of Conscience be not loud and home enough, all the world can tell us too, That God will render to us another day according to our Works now; though indeed Divine Revelation is so clear and exprefs, that it should utterly silence all manner of Dispute as to this matter.

And yet because some people have so far corrupted and debauched their minds, as not only to question, but moreover to deny the certainty of a state of Retribution, notwithstanding all that God and Nature have told us; therefore I shall briefly demonstrate the great Credibility of the thing, from these two Considerations, (not to insist at present on any more.)

1. *First*, From that eternal difference which is between Virtue and Vice; and

2. *Secondly*, From the promiscuous distribution of the things of this world.

1. *First*, From the eternal difference that is between Virtue and Vice. Such a difference there manifestly is between honouring God and blaspheming him; between Righteousness and Robbery; between

between Charity and Murder; and between every thing that is agreeable to right Reason, or contrary to it. The natures of these things are so vastly wide from each other, that it is impossible for us so to reconcile them, as to make those evil, or these good. Now, whence could this difference come, but from the Author of Nature, who hath shewed us all what is good, and hath written the Laws of Virtue in his Book, and in our own Consciences? And to what end, think you, were those Laws given to Rational Beings, but that they should follow that which is good? Or to what purpose could they be prescribed by a Wise Being, but that he himself might at last judge of mens Actions, and reward every one according to his Deeds? The eternal difference between Good and Evil, doth plainly and necessarily infer an eternal difference in their Consequents and Effects also; or else we must suppose all Notices of Good and Evil to be in vain, which is impossible.

To add some more light to this matter, I desire you to note, that two things especially are requisite, to render one capable of Reward, Understanding and Choice:

Choice : I mean, he must do that deliberately, voluntarily, and freely, which he knoweth to be good : for, if he acteth by a blind *Impetus*, neither perceiving the nature of the thing he is about, or what he is to do ; nor performing it with a rational freedom and inclination, he can be no more intitled to a Reward, than those Creatures are who move by meer instinct, or by an inward necessity and impulse of Nature. This is the ground and reason which makes one's Actions rewardable, because he knew how to have done otherwise, and might have done otherwise if he would ; and considering that he doth that heartily, readily, and upon choice, which he knoweth is fit, and ought to be done, therefore is his work accepted. *If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward,* 1 Cor. 9. 17. Upon this account there is no future Recompence for the Actions of irrational Creatures, how regular soever those Actions be, and agreeable to the frame and constitution of their Natures ; because they understand not the quality of their Actions, nor perform them upon choice, forecast, or deliberation. *The ox is said to know his owner, and the ass his masters crib ;* that is, he repairs

repairs to his Keeper and his fodder ; but yet without the use of Reason, or liberty of Will ; and only by the force of outward Idea's, pressing upon the organs of sensation, and so operating by consent of parts upon the animal spirits in the brain, and by them upon the locomotive faculty. In all this there is no virtue, because there is no choice ; no knowledge, properly so called ; and therefore when they die, their Souls die with them, being neither liable to punishment, nor capable of rewards, because their actions are not morally evil or good, in regard they have not wills or understandings. But this is not the condition of us men, because we are sufficiently endued with those powers which are requisite to dispose and fit us for Retributions : for, as God hath given us Laws to govern and direct our Lives, so hath he given us intellectual faculties, to examine and discover the meaning of those Laws. Some Notions are so natural unto us, that as soon as we come to the use of common Reason, we are able in some tolerable measure to distinguish between good and evil, and to find out the essential differences between them. And what plain Nature is defective in,
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Divine Revelation doth liberally supply ; so that the highest Truths, and the sublimest Duties, may be apprehended by us in a sufficient measure. And, as the Understanding is thus illuminated, so is that other faculty of the Soul, the Will, assisted and made fit for action. *That holy Spirit which is given to all that ask for him, Luke 11. 13. And which worketh in all both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13.* doth so prevent and further every humble man, that it lies in his power to refuse evil, and to chuse good ; and to conform his whole life to the life of Christ himself, in a fair degree and proportion.

Our Nature being thus framed and polisht, how can we think but that there will be, after all, a time of Reward ? else, to what purpose would all this be ? what would all our knowledge and virtue come to ? or wherein would it be better with us, than it is with the Beasts that perish ? That man must be sunk below his Reason, into a sort of Brutal state, who can part with the belief of a time of Retribution, and imagine that no discrimination will be made another day between one man and another, or between their doings : for as those noble
faculties

faculties of the Soul could not be given us, but with a design that they should cause and carry on other actions; than what irrational Creatures could be intended for, or else those faculties would be superfluous; so those actions being different, better or worse, more or less reasonable, must be distinguished by Rewards proportionable, or else all actions would be alike; as indifferent in the account of God, as they are in the esteem of some besotted men; for how can they be distinguished, but by a difference of Rewards? And if there be no such distinction, to what purpose are Laws, Reason, and a reasonable Appetite given us above all irrational Beings?

2. The certainty of Rewards being thus clear from that eternal difference which is between good and evil, the second thing will be as evident, That those Rewards must be expected in a future state, because the things of this life are distributed promiscuously. *Tho the righteous, and the wise, and their works be in the hand of God, or within his constant care, and under his special providence and inspection, yet, saith Solomon, no man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them; Eccles. 9: 1:*
 meaning,

meaning, that we cannot certainly tell how God is affected towards us, whether he be pleased or angry with us, by the outward Accidents which befall us in this World; for as it follows there, ver. 2. *All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.* Calamities from without, especially if they be Publick, are common to all Mankind, even as the usual Comforts of this life are: And such is the condition of our present state, and the ordinary course of God's Providence, that we all take our turn and share both in enjoying and suffering: *As the sun shineth upon the evil as well as upon the good:* so bad weather comes upon the good as well as upon the evil; nor is any sort of men priviledg'd from immoderate Rains or Drought, from unfruitful Seasons, from Pestilential Airs, from epidemical Diseases, nor from the dreadful effects of Wars, Famine, or Earthquakes, no more than they are priviledg'd from the common strokes of Death. As we are all made

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of the same mould, so we are all born under the same Laws of Nature and Providence; nor would it become a Wise Creator, ever and anon to invert, alter, or disturb the standing Order of Affairs, for the sake of some, although they be the best men, because their valuable Fortunes are not lodged in this World.

Nay, God is many times pleased to single out Good men from the rest, to undergo some remarkable Inconveniencies and Troubles here, after a particular manner; partly to subdue and wean off their Affections from the World the more; partly to exercise divers heroick Virtues, for which there would be no occasion did we not meet with difficulties and trials; and partly to make Good men instructive and eminent examples to others of Humility, Patience, Meekness, Charity, Fortitude, Self-denial, and Mortification. In short, this World is not the place for Rewards, but for Discipline and Probation; and therefore we may be sure, that a time will come when God will even every man's accounts, when he will use a distinguishing hand, according as our actions are now; and when he will adjust those seeming inequalities, which are commonly look'd upon

upon as disadvantages to Virtue. For even the natural Notion we have of God, includes Perfection of Wisdom, Righteousness, and Goodness; and to vindicate the Glory of these Divine Attributes, there must be a Future time for a suitable distribution of Rewards; because without this, his Laws would go and end without their Sanction, Right could not be done, much less could Grace and Kindness be shewed the Righteous, and consequently, the Great Sovereign of the World could not be cleared and Justified, as a most Wise, Righteous, and Merciful Governor.

2. Having thus shewed the Certainty of a recompence of Reward, I proceed now to the last thing I proposed to consider, *viz.* What an effectual way to all manner of Holiness, the hearty Belief and Consideration of this will be.

In all cases this gives every one the greatest encouragement, to be assured before-hand that he shall succeed in his undertakings. This facilitates his work, gives him heart to do it, and to go through with it, strengthens his resolutions against all dissuaves, inspires him with vigour, notwithstanding all difficulties before him, endues him with

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fresh courage to venture over every new rub, takes off the sense of pain, and makes him to press on still, and to persevere unto the end in well-doing. And this Argument the Apostle useth to render us *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, because we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. But that in due season we shall reap if we faint not, Gal. 6. 9. And that being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life, Rom. 6. 22.* But not to spend time upon generals.

There are indeed these Two things which are considerable disadvantages to the practice of Holiness, and yet are far outweighed by the hearty expectation of a Reward: The present invisibility, and the acknowledged Futurity of the Recompence I speak of.

1. First, It is some discouragement to a life of true Holiness, that our eyes do not yet see the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. For though Nature hath endued us with Reason, and Revelation furnisheth us with Faith; yet have we sensitive faculties which are apt to be very powerfully moved

moved by Objects that affect, please, and gratify our senses. And because the pleasures of sin are so sweet and suitable to these faculties, and so grateful to the lusts we carry in our bosom and in our very Nature, it cannot but be a great shock to our Constitution to resist those delightful allurements which come from without, and to part with those inclinations and desires which stir within; and all this in hopes of such Enjoyments as are far above all bodily relish and feeling.

2. Secondly, it is a further damp to the practice of Holiness, that the prospect of that Recompence which is offered to the eye of Faith, is a great way off, beyond the Grave, and in another World; there to be bestowed hereafter, when God shall think it a proper time for him to take an account of all our actions. This being a matter future and at a distance, makes the Happiness of another World (though it appear certain) to look less, than the Enjoyments which are near at hand; and therefore such people as are for their present profit or satisfaction, must needs be powerfully moved by Temptations, which give a more quick, as well as a more sensible stroke, than the idea of

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those Rewards of Holiness which seem so very remote.

But for these two disadvantages there is one thing which makes us most ample and abundant amends, and is a much stronger argument for Holiness, than those can pretend to be against it; and it is the greatness, and beyond all comparison, the transcendency of the Rewards of an Holy life, when once we come to receive them.

This Transcendency consisteth, 1. In the superlative Nature. And 2^{dly}, In the endless duration of the Felicities we hope for. Both which being weighed together against all that we can do or suffer here, infinitely compensate for those acts of Mortification and Self-denial, which essentially belong to an Holy life,

1. *First*, For the superlative quality of the Rewards we hope for. St. Paul calls them in general ἀρρητα, *things unspeakable, which is not lawful for a man to utter*, 2 Cor. 12. 4. because it is impossible to declare them to the full, considering our present state of weakness and incapacity. For which reason he saith elsewhere, *that they have not yet entered into the heart of man* (to be comprehended),

ed), 1 Cor. 2. 9. Were it nothing but a State of perfect Peace, and Rest, what a vast encouragement were this alone to us, *To run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God?*

Heb. 12. 1, 2. What may not that man bear, and go through with a chearful mind, who hath continually that place in his eye and heart, *Where all tears shall be wiped off? where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain?* Rev. 21. 4.

The Ancient Patriarchs, who had, in comparison, but a little glimpse of the Heavenly State, lookt upon it chiefly, if not only, as a State of rest from their wearisome Travels under the Sun; and yet that was enough to make them walk on humbly and obediently in the ways of God from place to place, looking still for a better Country, that is, *an heavenly*, Heb. 11. 16. And questionless it is a mighty encouragement to all thinking men, to follow daily a sanctimonious course of life, that thereby they may at last rid themselves fairly of all

those Briars and Thorns which now gall them upon Earth, and be finally delivered from those Vexations, Troubles, Grievs and Hardships, which the various Wickednesses of the world do subject them unto.

But the Gospel, through which the Lord Jesus hath brought Life and Immortality to light, represents that Life as a State of Perfection as well as Rest : As a State of Perfect Knowledge, of Perfect Purity, of Perfect Love, of Perfect Joy and Incorruption, of Perfect Harmony, Unity and Order : In short, As the perfect consummation of all those Felicities and Virtues which become Rational Beings, and which are included in those Scripture-notions, *of entering into life, receiving a crown of glory, being with Christ, seeing God, and being like him.* These Expressions signify the highest Pleasures and Perfections, which Created Natures are capable of enjoying ; and whoever doth heartily believe, that there is such a Future State, and that it is reserved for holy Souls as a Recompence of Reward, must needs be powerfully moved to lead a Godly, Righteous, and Sober Life now ; partly because (as I have shewed already) such an holy disposition

position of heart is directly instrumental towards our arriving at that State; the proper Preparative and Qualification for it: And partly too, because the nature of those Enjoyments which are in Heaven, do infinitely transcend all those sinful Satisfactions, which people of unsanctified Tempers run so greedily after here: And that upon a Twofold account. 1. *First*, Because the Enjoyments of that Blessed State are wholly Spiritual and Divine; and so, in sublimity and nobleness of Nature, they do surpass all Gratifications here below, as much (at least) as Reason is above meer Sense, as Spirit is above Flesh, or as a Man, or an Angel, is above a Beast. For all Sensualities are common to us, and to those Irrational Creatures, whose end is Destruction. They eat, and drink, and follow the conduct of Nature, as Voluptuous and Carnal men do; with this difference, that Brutes follow Nature in limited measures, and are guided by that part of their Nature which is in them the highest, and the most perfect; and therefore, as they have no guilt to answer for, so neither have they any Foreheads to blush, nor any Conscience to ake. In these respects the Sensualities of men are worse

worse than theirs ; not only Beastly, but shameful and painful also ; and that is, *Secondly*, The other account, on which the Enjoyments of a Future State do infinitely transcend the sinful Satisfactions of This, because they are pure and unmixt, as well as spiritual and divine. There is no Error to reproach and blemish the Knowledge of Spirits made perfect ; no alloy of Envy or Hatred to vitiate their Charity ; no Passion to disturb their Peace ; no Infirmities to disorder their Wills and Affections ; no Earthliness or Carnality to hinder the freedom of their Operations ; no irregularity of Thoughts to taint their Purity ; no sorrowful Reflections, no Shame, no Remorse, or Anguish, to lower or lessen those Felicities, which are so various and abundant in the presence of God.

And can there be a more direct and ready way to make us holy indeed, than seriously to consider what a glorious State of Perfection and Happiness that is in every respect, which a Life of Holiness will bring us to after all ? What better Inducements can a man have ? What properer means can he desire to enable him to resist Temptations, to renounce the very hidden things of Dishonesty, to abandon

abandon all sensual and inordinate Pleasures, to cleanse himself from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and for a good Conscience-sake to undergo any Plagues and Sufferings; than to carry in his thoughts the Rewards which are laid up for him? to feed his mind daily with the delightful contemplation of them? and with faith and affection, with complacency and longings to look up frequently to that place above, where such a Blissful and Unspeakable State is reserved for all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity?

2. And yet, besides the transcendent nature of that State, we are to consider, *secondly*, The Endless Duration of it; which was the next thing proposed to shew the incomparable efficacy of this Consideration, in order to a Life of substantial Holiness. This is one great disparagement to the Pleasures of Sin, *that they are but for a season*, Heb. 11. 25. brutish, and temporary too; Delights which pass away with the Act, and leave nothing behind them but that guilt and smart upon the Conscience, which is a Spark of Hell. However, Were all the present Pleasures of men innocent, yet how could it be possible to compare them,

them, being transient and short, with Fruitions that are Eternal? And such is the Duration of that State which is Future. For every Rational Soul being as immortal as Angels, their final Portion, whether it be in Bliss or Misery must needs be Everlasting; so that an Eternity of Punishment will be the Condemnation of some; and an Eternity of Perfection and Happiness will be the Reward of others: Which, when any thoughtful man doth thoroughly consider, as he cannot but renounce those sinful Satisfactions that are but for a little time; so he cannot too but patiently endure all those Inconveniences and Hardships, which God for wise and great Reasons shall think fit to bring upon him in this world; *Because, saith the Apostle, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. And again, Rom. 8. 18. I reckon, saith he, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Therefore, to draw this whole matter towards a conclusion; that you may be holy indeed, and in all manner of conversation, it is necessary for you to use
both

both your Eyes: With the one to look often upon the Recompence of Reward you hope for; and with the other to take a critical Account of the particular Branches of the Duty you are to do in order to it.

1. *First*, 'Tis necessary for you to retire from all the vain, and, as much as may be, even from the lawful Employments of the world; that you may with the greater seriousness and freedom think of that Eternal State which you must enter into when you come to dye; and therein remain without possibility of change, whatever the condition of that State shall be, whether Felicity, or Torment. Consider that you have not very long to live in this world. That extreme Age of Four-score years, which *David* speaks of, you are, perhaps, come to already, or well on towards it. Or, if that seems yet at a great distance, how can you tell that you shall ever come to it? Nay, how do you know but you are to be snatcht away in a few days, it may be the next night, or the next hour, as many others have been, who with equal reason thought themselves as long-lived as you conceive your self to be? Consider then, what may become of your
immortal

immortal spirit, when once it is gone hence? what all the Pleasures and Vanities of this World will come to? what Profit there will be by all your actions under the Sun? what Fruit you will have in those things whereof you are now ashamed? and what an infinite Loser you must be, should you miss of that glorious and blessed Eternity, which will be the Reward of those who now serve God in Righteousness and true Holiness? Ask your Conscience next, whether it be not a wise choice which such provident people make? whether they do not walk very prudently, though they go at present through honour and dishonour, through evil as well as good report? and when they come to their last Stage, Whether Death, which others are so afraid of, be not to them matter of Triumph and Rejoycing? Such Meditations as these are very well worth your frequent thoughts and retirements, because they are such direct and strong Motives to an Holy Life, as are not easy to be resisted by those who are persuaded of the certainty of a Future State; nor is any thing a greater prejudice to Religion than this, that people do not consider their latter end,
at

at least do not consider it with that train of serious thoughts which a Subject of such vast consequence requires. Therefore you should often employ your mind upon another world, and withdraw your self, what you can, out of this. Let Heaven be as daily in your eye, as the Sun giveth you light. Let your heart every day enter in those Mansions which the Captain of our salvation went to prepare for all that obey him. Affect your Soul with a warm sense of the ravishing joys and glories that are there. Contemplate the perfections and beauties of that adorable Being, by whose pleasure all things are, and were created. Fix your affections on the great Lover and Redeemer of your Soul. Be conversant with all those blessed Spirits, that rest not day and night, saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.* Think what it is to be there eternally ; to be so divinely employed to everlasting Ages ; to be with God and Christ, and with all the glorious company of Heaven without any end ; and to be truly happy, as without any Intermission, so beyond all possibility of lapse and termination.

2. This

2. This I meant, when I said but now, that you should with one eye look upon the recompence of reward; for it is a very moving sight to every Soul that is capable of such impressions. And when I told you, secondly, that with your other eye you should take a critical account of the particular branches of the Duty you are to do in order to this eternal state, my meaning was, that you must not think you can get to it without the entire practice of those things which God hath laid before you, as the necessary conditions of salvation, and as the direct ways and preparatives to it; but must carefully observe all the several parts of an Holy Life, which it is the Will of God you should now mind and perform.

And that these things may fall under your eye the better, I shall now, at the close of all, lay before you, in little, the model and platform of an Holy Life, as well as I can draw it out of the Holy Scriptures, which contain the whole at large.

St. Paul hath reduced all within the short compass of *Sobriety, Righteousness, and Godliness*, Tit. 2. 12, meaning, such acts of Virtue as relate to our own selves;

selves; such acts of Honesty as relate to other men; and such acts of Piety as relate to our common Creator and Redeemer; and by these Lines I shall proceed in drawing for you a little Scheme of such an Holy Life, as will most certainly end in an happy state hereafter, if you your self will but endeavour to copy it out in your own actions.

That you may act throughout after a rational manner, and make all you do a *reasonable service*, you must use all proper means of informing your understanding rightly; that you *may abound more and more in knowledge*, and in all judgment; and that you may approve (and like) *things that are excellent*. To which end, *Let the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom*; because the whole scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that you may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The first Moral Virtue you should practise and be in love with, is *Humility*, because it is a most amiable Virtue in the eye of God, and that which he rewardeth here with increase of grace. Therefore think not of your self more high-

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ly

- Rom. 12. 3. *ly than you ought to think, but think soberly, according as God hath dealt to you the measure of faith. Learn to be lowly in heart, and in your own eyes; and do nothing through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind esteem others better than your self. And, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, &c.*
- Matth. 11. 29.
- Phil. 2. 3.
- Ver. 5, 6, 7, 8.

This humble disposition will help you on to that degree of Holiness which consisteth in governing and regulating your Passions, because it is only by *pride that contention cometh*. Therefore you must follow Christ, as in *lowliness*, so in *meekness of heart*: learn to be of a *meek and quiet spirit*, of which St. Peter gives this noble character, *that it is in the sight of God of great price*; and so, let all *bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour be put away from you*.

'Tis also a very considerable part of Holiness, to be easy in all your outward Circumstances, and satisfied with your Condition, without those solicitous, carking and distrustful thoughts for to mor-

row,

you, which our Saviour reprehended the *Gentiles* for. To prevent which, you must give your mind *to be contented* with God's Providence towards you; with such things as you have; *with food and raiment; and in what state soever you are.*

Matth. 6.
32.

Hebr. 13.

5.
1 Tim. 6.
8.

Phil. 4. 11.

Yet in the Station wherein God hath placed you, use all honest diligence: *Study to be quiet, and to do your own business; being neither slothful in it, nor wandering about from it; but abide in the same calling wherein you are called, and therein abide with God.*

1 Thess. 4.

11.

Rom. 12.

11.

1 Tim. 5.

13.

1 Cor. 7.

20, 24.

As you must not suffer the cares of this life to be inordinate, so neither must you let your heart at any time be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness; but in eating, drinking, sleeping, and other refreshments of nature, observe such constant sobriety as serves for the preservation of your life and health. *Be temperate in all things. Be sober, be vigilant; and in this sense also, let your moderation be known unto all men.*

Luke 21;

34.

1 Cor. 9.

25.

1 Cor. 5.

8.

Phil. 4. 5.

Matth. 5.

8.

1 Pet. 2;

11.

1 Cor. 6.

18.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, saith our Saviour. To this end, *Abstain from those fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth, is without*

Matth. 5.

28.

Prov. 4.

23.

Matth. 7.

21, 22, 23.

the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body. That you may keep it Holy as the Temple of God, make a covenant with your eyes, that they look not on any forbidden Objects to lust after them; and especially keep your heart with all diligence, because out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, lasciviousness, an evil eye, and the like: all these evil things come from within, and defile a man.

There are other Virtues called Homiletical, or Social, which you are obliged to express towards your Neighbours, as you are a Member of a Society both Sacred and Civil; or, as you are a Christian, and as you are a Man.

As a Christian, you owe Respect, Maintenance, and Obedience to Christ's Ministers, in the discharge of their Sacred Function. And to this purpose you are required, *To know them which labour for you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake; so communicate unto them in all good things; to receive them in the Lord with all gladness, and to hold them in reputation; to count them worthy of double ho-*

1 Theff. 5.

12, 13.

Gal. 6. 6.

Phil. 2. 29.

nour;

nour; especially such as labour in the word ^{1 Tim. 5} and doctrine; to obey them that have the ^{17.} rule over you, and to submit your self; for they watch for your soul, as they that must ^{Heb. 13.} give account; that they may do it with ^{17.} joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.

As a Christian, you are bound to join your self to your Christian Brethren in Publick Fellowship and Communion, for the edification of the Church, and for the better setting forth of God's glory; Not forsaking the solemn assemblies, as ^{Heb. 10.} the manner of some is; nor making any ^{25.} schism in the body of Christ; for there is one body, and one spirit, even as you are ^{1 Cor. 12.} called in one hope of your calling; one ^{25.} Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and ^{Ephes. 4.} through all, and in us all. ^{4, 5, 6.}

As a Christian, you are required to consult the tranquil and orderly state of the Church; Endeavouring to keep the ^{Ephes. 4. 3.} unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; because God is not the author of confusion, ^{1 Cor. 14.} but of peace, in all the churches of the ^{33.} saints: and therefore we should all speak the same thing; that there be no division ^{1 Cor. 1.} among us, but that we be all perfectly ^{10.} joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

U 3

As

As a Christian you are not to set up your own private Opinion in publik opposition and defiance to the received sense of the Church you belong to; but if you have Faith (that is, a perswasion in some doubtful matters different from the Doctrines which are commonly profess'd) have it to your self before God; and in no case affect singularity, where we have no such custom, nor the (Apostolical) Churches of God.

As a Christian you are obliged by the Laws of Christianity, not to despise him, who in matters of indifferency is Erroneous or Scrupulous; nor yet to judge him who is fully perswaded in his own mind; but as the weak in Faith are to be charitable towards the strong; so are the strong to *receive the weak*, and to *bear the infirmities of the weak*, and not to please themselves: For we are to bear one anothers burthens; to have compassion one of another; to love one another as God loved us all; and to provoke one another unto love, and unto good works.

As a Christian you must be very careful not to occasion another to sin by your ill example or advice, nor to put a stumbling-block in your brother's way; but rather, to admonish him, to rebuke him,

Rom. 14.
22.

1 Cor. 11.
16.

Rom. 14.
3.
—5.

Rom. 14.
1.

Rom. 15.

Gal. 6. 2.

1 Pet. 3. 3.

1 John 4.
11.

Heb. 10.

24.

Rom. 14.
13.

2 Thess. 3.

15.

him, and not suffer sin upon him; in your Lev. 19.
 station to shew your self in all things a pattern ^{17.}
 of good works; and to let your light so Tit. 2. 7.
 shine before all men, that they may see your
 good works, and glorifie your Father which Matth. 5. 16.
 is in heaven.

As a Christian you must endeavour
 to give no offence, neither to the Church
 of God, nor to Unbelievers of any sort,
 or on either hand; that the word of God 1 Cor. 10.
 may not be blasphemed; nor the way of ^{31.}
 truth be evil spoken of: but you must adorn Tit. 2. 5.
 the doctrine of God your Saviour in all 2 Pet. 2. 2.
 things, and help to convince gainsayers, Tit. 2. 10.
 and to win them by your conversation, or Tit. 1. 9.
 at least, to stop their mouths; that whereas 1 Pet. 3. 1.
 they speak evil of us, as of evil-doers, v. 16.
 they may be ashamed who falsely accuse our
 good conversation in Christ.

If now you consider your self in a
 civil capacity, as a man linked together
 with other men in Human Societies; so
 there are divers Virtues for you to exer-
 cise, which are integral parts of an Holy
 life, because they are required by the
 Laws of our Holy Religion, as well as
 by the ends of Civil Polity.

Of this kind is that great and general
 Law which commands honest and equal
 Transactions between man and man,

Math. 7.
12.

and to this purpose is that of our Saviour,
*All things whatsoever ye would that men
should do unto you, do ye even so to them;
for this is the law and the prophets.*

From which general Command many
more particular obligations do arise.

Exod. 20.
15.

Col. 3. 25.

2 Thess. 4.
6.

Prov. 3.
27.

Exod. 20.
17.

Rom. 13.
7.

Mic. 6. 8.

Rom. 13.
13.

13.

Towards all Mankind you must do
that which is right, reasonable, and fair,
in all cases of commutative and distri-
butive Justice. You must not by any
means *steal*, nor do any *wrong*, nor go be-
yond, or defraud your brother in any mat-
ter; nor withhold good from them to whom
it is due, when it is in the power of thine
hand to do it; nor covet any thing that is
thy neighbours; but render to all their
dues; do justly, walk honestly, and per-
form all those acts which the Scripture
calleth, sometimes *Equity*, sometimes
Judgment, and very often by the name
of *Righteousness*.

Rom. 13.
7.

7.

v. 1.

Towards your Superiors in the State,
you must behave your self with that Re-
spect and Submission which justly be-
longs to them; you must for conscience
sake pay tribute to whom tribute is due;
custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear;
honour to whom honour. Be subject unto
the higher powers, because there is no power
but of God. Submit your self to every
Human

Human Creature (or Governor) whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto deputies as unto them that are sent by him: And you must obey your parents in the Lord also, for this is right:

¹ Pet 2.
13, 14.

Eph. 6. 1.

Toward your Inferiors, you are bound to carry you self with that Kindness, Graciousness, Affability, and Obliging Sweetness of Temper, which is due to them; you must condescend to men of low estate. Be pitiful, be courteous, be gentle unto all men; be kindly affectioned, and put on (as the elect of God) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing others, and forgiving others, even as Christ forgives you.

Rom. 12.

16.

¹ Pet 3. 5.

² Tim. 2.

24.

Rom. 12.

10.

Col. 3.

12, 13.

Towards your equals, the Ends of Civil Society, as well as the Laws of Religion, require you to frame your whole Life so, that, according to your power, you may be both inoffensive and useful in the world.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not. As you have opportunity, do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Prov. 27.

10.

Gal. 6. 10.

Love your neighbour as your self; not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed, and in truth; with love unfeigned; with a pure heart

Rom. 13.

9.

¹ Jo. 3. 18.

¹ Pet. 1. 22.

Rom. 12. *heart fervently; and without dissimulation.*
9.

Be always candid and good-natur'd, in putting the best construction that can be upon the Actions of others; in concealing their faults; and in making all due allowance for them; *Bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things.*

1 Cor. 13.
7.

Heb. 12. *Follow peace; follow after the things which make for peace: Seek peace, and ensue it: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*
14.
Rom. 14.
19.
1 Pet. 3. 11.
Rom. 12.
18.

To this end, be sure to avoid all Backbiting, Tale-bearing, and Lying. Let *love lay a covering* over your Neighbour's Sins: Neither imitate, nor countenance those who learn to be idle, by wandering about from house to house: And not only idle, but ratlers also, and busibodies, speaking things which they ought not. Such froward mouths, and perverse lips, as Solomon calls them, destroy the ends of Speech, by being employed chiefly in privily slandering, and in scattering Lies, to set on fire the whole course of nature: Quite contrary to that great Law of Righteousness, Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.

Prov. 10.
12.

1 Tim. 5.
13.

Prov. 4.
24.

Jam. 3. 6.

Eph. 4. 25.

Towards

Towards people in misery, you are bound to express that compassion and goodness, which is their due, when it lieth in your power, and their necessities call for it: *To comfort such as mourn; to deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; to minister to the sick, and the prisoner; to visit the fatherless and widows in their distress; to deal thy bread to the hungry; to cover the naked; to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; and throughout your Life to follow that Great Exemplar of Mercy and Holiness, who went about doing good.*

Isa. 61. 2. 1
Jer. 22. 3.
Matth. 25.
44.
Jam. 1. 24.
If. 58. 7.
Job 29. 15.

Acts 10.
35.

To your very Enemies you are a Debtor too, in the bonds of Justice and Charity.

You are not allowed to meditate Revenge, how you may do one shrew'd turn for another, or take away *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, because *vengeance is God's*. Nor are you to seek reparation in a private, hostile manner, but at the hands of the Magistrate, *who judgeth for the Lord*: But you must *shew out of a good conversation your works in meekness of wisdom*. Instead of resisting evil, and hating your Enemies, you are obliged by Christ's Religion, *To love your enemies, to bless them that curse you,*

Matth. 5.
38.
Rom. 12.
19.
Matth. 5.
39.
2 Chron.
19. 6.
Jam. 3. 13.
Matth. 5.
39. 44. 45.

Rom. 12.
20, 21.

to do good to them that hate you, and to pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

There remaineth now that part of an Holy Life, which consisteth in Godliness; and the Apostle hath exprest it briefly, by *glorifying God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*, 1 Cor. 6. 20.

As to the glorifying of God internally in your Spirit, those Divine Acts are various. So infinitely great are the Perfections and Glories of his Nature, that your mind ought to be struck with a most awful sense of his Majesty, and with the profoundest Reverence that can be paid to so Excellent, so Transcendent a Being. This the Scripture intends when it speaks so often of the Worshipping of God; meaning, such Acts of Adoration as spring from a most humble and deep perception of his Glories, and from that great esteem and veneration which we should all carry constantly in our thoughts towards him, for his Infinite Perfections.

The

The Boundless Goodness of his Nature, and his Benignity to all the Works of his hands, especially to Mankind, tho we be a very undeserving part of his Creation; this obligeth us, *To love him* Matth. 22. 37. *with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind; to delight our selves in him; and to fulfil his law,* as the Standard and Touchstone of our Affections. Psal. 37. 4. 1 Joh. 5. 3.

The exact rectitude of his Will in all his Actions according to the Rules of Eternal Reason and Equity; this binds us to bear in our own hearts a representation of him; *To be followers* (imitators) *of him, as dear children; to be perfect, as he is perfect; to be merciful, as he is merciful; to be holy, as he is holy; and to put on the new man, which after God* (according to his likeness) *is in righteousness, and holiness, and truth.* Eph. 5. 1. Matth. 5. 48. Luk. 6. 36. Eph. 4. 24.

Such is his Purity, and hatred of all Wickedness, his Omniscience, Justice, and Power, that you must *stand in awe,* Psal. 4. 4. *and sin not; Knowing the terror of the Lord,* and what a fearful thing it is to *fall into the hands of the living God.* 2 Cor. 5. 11.

It is he that made you, and not you your self; and he that redeemed you, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ: Pf. 100. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 18. 19.

Therefore

- Rom. 6. 13. Therefore you must yield *your selves* unto God, as *one* that is alive from the dead; and being now delivered out of the hands of your enemies, you must serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life.
- Rev. 19. 6. The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth over
 Prov. 16. 33. all; the whole disposing of our Fortunes
 Eph. 1. 11. here, is of him: He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; and maketh all
 Rom. 8. 28. things to work together for good to them
 Jam. 4. 7. that love him; Therefore, you must submit your self to him; neither murmuring
 1 Cor. 10. 10. at his proceedings; nor despising his chastenings, nor fainting when you are rebuked
 Heb. 12. 5. of him; but be still, and know that he is
 Ps. 46. 10. God; be patient in tribulation; and bless
 Rom. 12. 12. the name of the Lord, whether he giveth,
 Job 1. 21. 2. 10. or taketh away; and whether you receive good at the hand of God, or receive evil.
- Lam. 3. 33. And because he doth not willingly afflict,
 1 Pet. 5. 7. nor grieve the children of men; but careth
 Heb. 13. 5. for you, and hath promised, that he will never leave you, nor forsake you; but will
 Lam. 3. 25. be good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him; therefore you
 1 Pet. 5. 7. must cast all your care upon him, and tarry
 Ps. 27. 14. his leisure; and be of good courage; and of
 Luk. 8. 48. good comfort; putting your trust always
 1 Pet. 1. 13. in him; and hoping to the end.

These

These Internal Acts of the Mind, Adoration, Reverence, Love, Obedience, Conformity, Fear, Submission, Resignation, Dependence and Hope, are necessary, and principal parts of an Holy Life; and such as our Saviour calls, *the* Joh. 4. 23. *worshipping of the Father in spirit, and in truth.*

But besides these Inward Acts of Divine Worship, there are other Outward Expressions of Devotion and Godliness, which the Great Creator and Judge of the Body hath also a right unto; and to which the disposition of the mind will very readily prompt you, if it be truly pious and humble.

You must pray unto God for all the Spiritual and Temporal Blessings you want; not only in private, *in your closet*, Matt. 6. 6. and with your *door shut*, but publickly also, *in the great congregation.* For *the* Ps. 12. 12. *Lord loveth the gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob; and he is very greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,* Ps. 89. 7. *and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.* With this you are to join that Holy Exercise of returning your most humble Thanks to God for the mercies you have already received; *Praising and blessing his holy name in psalms,* Eph. 5. 9. *and*

and hymns, and spiritual songs. And that these your Services may be the more acceptable, you must present them unto the great Lord of the world in the most reverent manner ; with Religious Prostrations, Bowings, and Genuflexions, which God appropriated to himself as his peculiar right, forbidden you, in the Second Commandment, to give them to any Creature, or Representation.

Lastly, For the more solemn performance of these Holy Duties, you must religiously observe those Times, both Occasional and Stated, which are set apart for Acts of Divine Adoration ; especially, the First day of the Week, *the Lord's day* ; which hath been solemnly observed in the Church from the Primitive times of Christianity. Then you are to *praise God among the multitude*, to *reverence his sanctuary* ; to *fall low on your knees before his footstool* ; to *be swift to hear* ; and having heard his word, to *keep it in an honest and good heart* ; and to *bring forth fruit with patience*. In short ; you must do *all things decently, and according to order* ; and for your good to edification.

This I take to be the plain Compendium of a Life that is truly holy ; nor do

1 Cor. 16.

2.

Rev. 1. 10.

Ps. 109. 30.

Lev. 19.

30.

Ps. 132. 7.

Jam. 1. 19.

Luk. 8. 15.

1 Cor. 14.

40.

Rom. 15. 2.

I know any one necessary part of the whole Duty of Man, but what is comprehended under one or other of these Heads; which I have gather'd out of the Scriptures into a little room, that every Reader, though of an ordinary and common understanding, may at one short view, easily see the summary Contents of that great Rule, whereby he is, at his utmost peril, bound to order and govern his Actions. And I dare say, whosoever will be careful to do these things, shall never fall.

Now, *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
1 Thess. 5. 23.

A *lmighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy Holy Name, through Christ our Lord.*

X

O God,

O God, the Protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is Holy; increase and multiply upon us thy mercy, that thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord.

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy Will, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, we beseech thee, grant thy People Grace to withstand the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come, Grant to us thy humble Servants, that by thy Holy Inspiration we may think those things that be good, and
by

by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

O Almighty Lord, and Everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy Laws, and in the works of thy Commandments; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

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